



Shopper's Guide

# Is Cereal a Healthy Choice?



Look for more whole grains and less sugar in cereals marketed as "healthy".

Breakfast is often called the most important meal of the day, because it's the first opportunity to fuel your body for the day ahead after a long night's fast. It's also the first chance to begin meeting your daily nutrient needs. An easy-to-prepare, go-to breakfast increases the likelihood that you'll find time to fuel your body in the morning. So, ready-to-eat breakfast cereals are an ideal option for healthy, convenient breakfasts. And food manufacturers have taken it up a notch in recent years by developing cereals marketed as "healthy," which are packed with whole grains, nuts, seeds, and fruits. But how do you know which are the best picks?

There are a few important key factors to be aware of when making your cereal selection. Grain is the main ingredient in all cereals, and choosing *whole grains* will maximize your fiber intake. Another common ingredient in many cereals is added sugar. Compare your Nutrition Facts labels to identify those with the least amount of added sugars. Remember, four grams of sugar is equal to one teaspoon. A sprinkle of fresh or dried fruit is a healthier way to sweeten up your morning meal.

**Helpful Hints.** To start your day in a healthy way, check out these tips before filling your cereal bowl with so-called "healthy" cereals.

- ▶ **Round It Out.** To turn your whole-grain-based cereal into a well-rounded meal, serve it with reduced-fat milk or a calcium-fortified milk alternative. Topping it with fruit and a sprinkle of nuts will also boost your nutrient intake.
- ▶ **Whole Grain First.** Ready-to-eat cereals offer a great chance to boost your whole grain intake. Scan the ingredients lists on cereal boxes to find those listing a whole grain first, including whole wheat, rolled oats, brown rice, quinoa, millet, amaranth, and sorghum.
- ▶ **Measure It Up.** Serving size varies widely between cereals—some as low as one-half cup and others as high as one and one-fourth cup. Keep in mind that if you're eating more than one serving, you need to recalculate the nutrient content. **EN**

—Heidi McIndoo, MS, RD

## "Healthy" Breakfast Cereals Nutritional Comparison

✓ = EN's Picks. As with all EN comparisons, this is only a sampling of products. Picks list their first ingredient as a whole grain and contain at least 3 g fiber (11% DV) and no more than 6 g sugar\*.

"HEALTHY" BREAKFAST CEREALS**	Serving Size c (g)	Calories	Total Fat (g)	Sat Fat (g)	Carbs (g)	Sodium (mg)	Fiber (g)	Sugar* (g)	Protein (g)
✓ 365 Organic Bran Flakes	¾ (30)	100	0.5	0	24	95	5	2	4
365 Organic Brown Rice Crisps	1 (30)	110	1	0	25	85	1	1	2
365 Protein & Fiber Flakes & Clusters	⅔ (55)	220	6	0.5	35	170	5	12	11
✓ Arrowhead Mills Organic Amaranth Flakes	1 (34)	140	2	0	27	5	3	4	4
✓ Back to the Roots Organic Stoneground Flakes California Whole Wheat	1 (45)	160	0.5	0	36	100	5	5	6
✓ Back to the Roots Organic Stoneground Flakes Purple Corn	1 (45)	160	2	0	34	100	3	5	4
Cascadian Farm Organic Hearty Morning Fiber	¾ (48)	170	2.5	0.5	38	135	8	8	4
Cheerios & Ancient Grains	¾ (28)	110	2	0.5	22	105	2	5	3
Cheerios Protein Cinnamon Almond	1¼ (55)	220	4.5	0.5	40	220	3	16	7
✓ Engine 2 Rip's Big Bowl Banana Walnut	½ (55)	210	3.5	0	39	55	6	4	6
Erewhon Harvest Medley	1 (30)	110	1	0	24	65	2	0	3
✓ Fiber One	½ (30)	60	1	0	25	110	14	0	2
Food For Life Ezekiel 4:9 Sprouted Grain Crunchy Cereal Cinnamon Raisin	½ (57)	190	1	0	41	160	5	8	7
✓ Food for Life Ezekiel 4:9 Sprouted Grain Crunchy Cereal Golden Flax	½ (57)	180	2.5	0	37	190	6	0	8
✓ Grape Nuts Flakes	¾ (29)	110	1	0	24	135	3	4	3
✓ Kashi 7 Whole Grain Nuggets	½ (58)	210	1.5	0	46	220	6	3	8
Kashi Dark Cocoa Karma	31 biscuits (55)	180	1	0	42	0	6	9	8
Kashi Go Lean Crunch Cereal	¾ (53)	190	3	0	38	100	8	13	9
Kashi Go Lean Original Cereal	1¼ (58)	180	2	0	40	115	13	8	12
Kashi Go Lean Vanilla Clusters Plant Powered Cereal	1 (55)	230	6	1	37	85	6	9	9
Kashi Organic Sprouted Grains	1½ (56)	190	1	0	45	110	6	9	6
Kellogg's SmartStart	1 (50)	190	1	0	43	200	3	14	4
Kellogg's Special K Fruit & Yogurt	¾ (32)	120	1	0	27	140	3	10	2
Kellogg's Special K Nourish Apple Raspberry Almond	1 (51)	190	2.5	0	41	170	5	10	5
Kellogg's Special K Protein	¾ (32)	120	1	0	19	190	3	7	10
Nature Valley Baked Oat Bites	¾ (50)	210	6	2.5	34	160	3	13	7
✓ Nature's Path Flax Plus, Cinnamon	¾ (30)	120	1	0	24	140	4	5	3
Nature's Path Kamut Puffs	1 (16)	50	0	0	11	0	2	0	2
Nature's Path Mesa Sunrise with Raisins	1 (55)	210	1	0	47	200	2	12	3
✓ Nature's Path Mesa Sunrise	¾ (30)	120	1	0	24	125	3	4	3
Nature's Path Smart Bran	½ (30)	80	1	0	24	130	13	6	3
One Degree Brown Rice Crisps	⅔ (30)	110	1	0	23	115	1	1	2
Post Great Grains Blueberry Morning	1¼ (55)	220	3	0	44	190	3	16	4
Post Great Grains Crunchy Pecan	¾ (52)	210	6	0.5	38	150	5	8	5
Quaker Real Medleys Cherry Almond Pecan Multigrain	¾ (56)	240	7	1	41	40	3	15	5
✓ Trader Joe's Bran Flakes	¾ (30)	100	0.5	0	24	220	5	6	3
Trader Joe's Organic Honey Crunch 'n Oats	¾ (30)	120	1	0	25	135	2	6	2
Trader Joe's Raisin Bran	1 (55)	170	1	0	44	120	8	16	4
Trader Joe's Toasted Oatmeal Flakes	¾ (30)	110	1	0	23	19	3	7	3
✓ Uncle Sam Original Wheat Berry Flakes	¾ (55)	210	6	0	37	140	10	<1	9

Note: c=cup, g=gram, mg=milligram, sat fat=saturated fat, carb=carbohydrates, DV=Daily Value, Daily requirement based on 2,000 calorie/day diet. Source: product labels and manufacturer website. \*Sugar grams listed on label may include naturally-occurring sugars. \*\*Based on serving size suggested on product label.