



Is it okay to add a teaspoon of sugar to cereals such as porridge or wheat biscuits?

Breakfast cereals can be sweetened with the addition of fruit – either fresh, frozen, dried, or tinned in natural juice. Ideas could include adding sultanas, grated apple, sliced banana or fresh strawberries to your favourite cereal. If cereal is eaten plain, adding a small teaspoon of sugar to a cereal high in fibre and low in sugar (e.g. wheat biscuits or porridge) is better than offering children a cereal which is high in sugar; but remember to gradually cut back on the amount of sugar that is added over time.



What about packaged breakfast drinks?

Breakfast drinks such as Sanitarium Up & Go and Vitasoy Vitago are generally low in fat and high in fibre and protein. They can be helpful as a quick breakfast choice for those days when time is limited. They can become expensive if used everyday and could be made cheaper at home by making a fruit smoothie. See the OPAL healthy breakfast recipes to make your own super smoothie at opal.sa.gov.au

Are energy drinks a good choice for brekky?

Breakfast is an important meal for providing essential nutrients from the main food groups. Energy drinks are not a suitable breakfast food as they are high in sugar and caffeine and do not contribute any vitamins, minerals, fibre or other nutrients to children's diets. Energy drinks are not suitable for children as they can be highly sensitive to the effects of caffeine. A healthy breakfast should include foods from at least 3 food groups. For more information on caffeine and energy drinks check out www.foodstandards.gov.au

To find out more and be involved, visit opal.sa.gov.au or call your OPAL Local Council Team.

A healthy brekky is easy as

Peel a banana **Pour** milk on cereal
Pop grainy bread in the toaster



Frequently asked questions

Why is breakfast important?

A healthy breakfast provides a great start to the day and helps kids' learning and concentration during the day. It also provides plenty of vitamins and minerals our kids need for a healthy body.

How do I choose a healthy breakfast cereal?

With all the breakfast cereals around and all the clever marketing it can be confusing at the supermarket. The best cereal choices are those that are low in sugar, low in salt and high in fibre. The following are signs of a healthy breakfast cereal.

Ingredients List

- The ingredients list on packaged foods shows all ingredients in descending order of amount with the main ingredient listed first and the smallest ingredient listed last.
- The first 3-4 ingredients listed will give you a good idea of the main ingredients. Look for healthy ingredients at the

beginning of the list such as whole wheat or wheat bran for high fibre choices.

- Carefully consider products with sugar, fat or salt listed among the first few ingredients as they are likely to be less healthy choices.
- For more information about the many different ingredient names for sugar, fat and salt check out www.foodstandards.gov.au or chat with your Local OPAL Team.

Nutrition Information Panel

- The Nutrition Information Panel on packaged foods shows the energy, fat, protein, carbohydrate, sugar, sodium (salt) and sometimes fibre content of the food.
- Breakfast cereals can be compared by looking at the amounts of these nutrients shown in the per 100g column.
- The best choices are those that are lowest in sugar, low in sodium and high in fibre.



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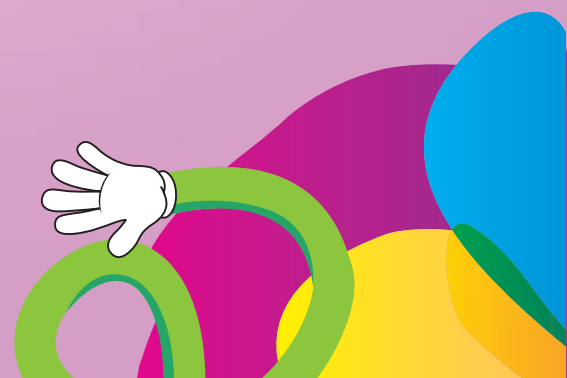


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Nutrition claims on cereal boxes

- Nutrition and health claims need to be read carefully and compared with the 'Ingredients List' and 'Nutrition Information Panel'.
- Claims such as 'high in fibre', 'low in sugar' or 'low in salt' are usually good signs of healthier choices (high fibre cereals are generally less processed and contain the wholegrain goodness for keeping us regular and providing longer lasting energy).

Examples of good breakfast cereal choices can be found in the OPAL 'Healthy Brekky' brochure available at opal.sa.gov.au

Is it okay to have white high fibre bread instead of wholemeal or wholegrain bread?

Wholemeal and wholegrain breads offer the greatest nutritional value in terms of fibre as well as vitamins, minerals and healthy oils that come from grains and seeds.



Highly processed white breads do not provide as much long lasting energy as grainy breads which are digested more slowly. High fibre white breads are generally a better choice than regular white breads as they do have added fibre. However, the best choices for plenty of fibre and long lasting energy are breads with whole grains and seeds. High fibre white breads may be a way of progressing children who only eat white bread to choices containing grains and seeds.

Children may prefer white bread, however if the only choices on offer are wholemeal and grainy and parents and older children are seen to be enjoying high fibre choices, younger children are likely to adapt over time. Wholemeal and grainy breads also have the extra benefit of being more filling so they are less likely to be overeaten. Why not try 1 slice white high fibre and 1 slice wholemeal or wholegrain bread or toast when encouraging children to try a new type of bread?

Which is healthier, butter or margarine?

Butter contains about 50% of the unhealthy fat called saturated fat. Data from The Australian National Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey 2007 showed that children currently consume twice the recommended maximum levels of saturated fat. Excess intake of saturated fat contributes to high cholesterol and, in the longer term, heart disease. Therefore, we should avoid foods high in saturated fats, like butter.

Many margarines are a healthier choice because they have a maximum of only 20% saturated fat and contain the healthier polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. Small amounts of these healthy fats are beneficial for keeping our heart healthy and cholesterol levels down. Look for margarines that are made from canola, sunflower, olive and other poly or monounsaturated oils. The Heart Foundation Tick can also help in choosing healthy margarine options.



The dietary habits established in childhood are often set for life. You can set your children on a path to healthier eating from an early age by including healthy margarines as part of their regular healthy diet.

What are the healthiest spreads and toppings for toast?

Most spreads and toppings should be used sparingly.

Toast toppings such as avocado, tomato, reduced-fat cheese or mashed banana are great as they provide essential nutrients from the main food groups. Nutritious hot toppings include baked beans or a poached or boiled egg.

Other toppings such as 100% fruit spreads/jams, peanut butter, vegemite, marmite and honey* are okay in small amounts, as they are high in salt and/or sugar. Try to stick to a thin scrape of these spreads on your grainy or wholemeal toast.

*Honey should not be given to children under 12 months of age as it contains bacteria that may be harmful to babies



What about fruit juice for breakfast?

Fruit juice is high in sugar and lacks the fibre that is contained in whole pieces of fruit. The best drink choices for children at breakfast time are water or plain milk#. If fruit juice is consumed, limit intake to 1/2 cup of 100% fruit juice per day, mixed with some water. It's best to consume fruit juice with a meal, such as breakfast, to reduce the risk of tooth decay. Try including fresh fruit with your breakfast, rather than juice.

full fat milk for under 2 year olds, reduced-fat for 2-5 year olds, reduced-fat or skim for over 5 year olds



Is something unhealthy better than nothing for breakfast?

Breakfast is an important meal and a great opportunity for children to get the energy, vitamins and minerals they need for healthy growth and development. Getting into the routine of sitting down to eat breakfast daily is a good place to start and it is essential for parents or carers to role model this as a positive behaviour. If children are not currently eating anything for breakfast, begin with establishing this routine. Try basic breakfast ideas like a piece of fruit or toast initially. Once the routine is established, you can work on increasing their nutrient intake by providing children with a few healthy choices, to help develop their independence.

