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March Newsletter

CHOOSING HEALTHY BREAKFAST CEREALS



Do you ever stand in the grocery store and feel unsure which cereal to choose for your children? It can be overwhelming with so many options on the shelves and each brand claiming to be the best option. These simple guidelines for choosing nutritious breakfast cereal will help make your next trip stress free!

1. PRIORITIZE WHOLE GRAIN INGREDIENTS

Whole grains are plant seeds containing all three parts of the seed: the germ, bran and endosperm. The germ and bran are packed with nutritious fibre, vitamins and minerals. Refined (or processed) grains have the germ and bran removed and are often fortified with vitamins including Niacin, Thiamine and Folate and minerals including iron. However, these products still lack the fibre and magnesium found in whole grains.

Is whole wheat flour a whole grain?

Technically no. Whole grain products must have relatively equal proportions of germ, bran and endosperm as the original seed. During milling, most germ and some bran are removed from whole wheat flour, this disqualifies it from being a "whole grain". However, it will still contain more fibre compared to white flour making it a more nutrient dense choice.

What to look for on the ingredients list?

Be aware that products made with whole wheat flour and labeled "multi-grain" or "100% whole wheat" are not considered whole grains. When reading labels look for "whole grain" followed by the type of grain in brackets such as:

- Kamut
- Spelt
- Millet
- Bulgur
- Farro
- Amaranth
- Freekeh
- Rye
- Oats
- Quinoa
- Wild rice
- Brown rice
- Corn
- Buckwheat
- Barley
- Triticale

2. CHOOSE HIGH FIBRE (AT LEAST 4G/SERVING)

Diets high in fibre support a healthy gut microbiome and can help reduce risk of chronic disease later in life. Health Canada has the following recommendations for how much fibre children should be consuming per day:

Children aged: 1-3 yrs 19g/day 4-8 yrs 25g/day	Girls aged: 9-18 yrs 26g/day	Boys aged: 9-13 yrs 31g/day 14-18 yrs 38g/day
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3. AIM FOR LOW SUGAR (6G/CUP OR LESS)

Try and find low sugar options, aiming for 6g per cup or less as a general guideline. Too much sugar in children's diets can increase their risk of developing dental cavities. It can also prevent them from eating other healthy foods by making them full too soon.