



Community and Public Health

Label reading: what to look for in a breakfast cereal

Kia ora koutou,

Nutrition information panels provide us with details about the energy and nutrients in packaged food. It is compulsory for food manufacturers to display these on packaging. While they can be confusing at times, it can also be a helpful tool to help us make healthier choices when we are shopping.

Breakfast cereals are a great example because there's a huge variety to choose from, and they all vary substantially in fibre and sugar content - some cereals contain more than 20% sugar! While some sugar is naturally present in breakfast cereal, for example, in dried fruit, they often contain a large amount of added sugar. It's best to look for a product that is low in sugar (aim for less than 15g, or less than 20g if the cereal contains dried fruit) and high in fibre (5g or more).

The table below compares the two nutrition information panels for *Weetbix* and one for *Golden Oats and Fruit Muesli*. When you compare these products, or any others, make sure that you look at the 'per 100g' rather than the 'per serve' column, as the serving sizes of products vary. Most importantly, keep in mind that there is usually no perfect product that is low in sugar, high in fibre, affordable and meets your taste preference - it's a compromise 😊

	Weet-Bix Serving size: 30g (2 biscuits) Servings per pack: 24 (750g)		Golden Oats and Fruit muesli Serving size: 50g Servings per pack: 13	
	Per serve	Per 100g	Per serve	Per 100g
Energy (kJ) (cal)	444 106	1480 353	925 221	1850 442
Protein (g)	3.6	12	5.3	10.6
Fat (g)	0.4	1.4	7.9	15.8
saturated fat (g)	0.1	0.3	1.4	2.7
Carbohydrate (g)	20.1	67	30	60
Sugars (g)	0.8	2.8	9.8	19.5
Dietary fibre (g)	3.0	10.1	4.0	7.9
Sodium (mg)	81	270	74	148

Some other helpful tips and tricks to make your breakfast cereal healthier and tastier:

- Top your breakfast with yoghurt and/ or fruit (fresh, canned or frozen)
- Add extra oats to your breakfast cereal. This will help reduce the cost too because oats are inexpensive
- Sprinkle seeds (such as sunflower, pumpkin, or chia) on top or stir peanut butter into your porridge to increase protein content and heart-healthy fat

Ngā mihi nui,
Beyning