

CREDITING BREAKFAST CEREALS

Ready-to-eat (RTE) and cooked breakfast cereals served in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) must be whole grain-rich (WGR) and meet the minimum serving size requirements. For more information, see the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) handout, *Criteria for Whole Grain-rich Foods*, and the USDA's ounce equivalents chart, *Whole Grain-rich Ounce Equivalents for School Nutrition Programs*.

SERVING SIZES FOR BREAKFAST CEREALS

Serving sizes for cereals are based on the USDA's ounce equivalents chart. This chart divides products into nine groups (A-I) based on their average grain content. Cooked breakfast cereals such as oatmeal are in group H. Cold RTE breakfast cereals are in group I. Both groups require 28 grams or 1 ounce of product to credit as 1 ounce equivalent of grains.

- **Cooked Breakfast Cereals:** Cereal grains in group H (such as oats, buckwheat, and quinoa) are served cooked and water is added in preparation. They credit based on the cooked volume equivalent of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. All cooked breakfast cereals must meet the WGR criteria and list a whole grain as the primary ingredient. Cooked 100 percent whole-grain breakfast cereals are not required to be fortified. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Identifying Whole Grains*.
- **RTE Breakfast Cereals:** One ounce equivalent of RTE breakfast cereals equals 1 cup of flakes or rounds, $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups of puffed, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of granola. Menu planners can credit RTE breakfast cereals based on either volume (cups) or weight (grams). If the appropriate volume of cereal weighs less than 28 grams, it credits as 1 ounce equivalent, e.g., 1 cup of flaked cereal that weighs 26 grams credits as 1 ounce equivalent.



WGR REQUIREMENT FOR BREAKFAST CEREALS

To be WGR, breakfast cereals must list a whole grain as the first ingredient and the cereal must be fortified. Fortified breakfast cereals contain five nutrients (iron, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and folic acid) lost during the refining process and additional vitamins and minerals that do not exist naturally in grains. To determine if a RTE breakfast cereal is fortified, check the ingredients statement. Fortified cereals must contain:

- the five enrichment nutrients (iron, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and folic acid); and
- additional nutrients such as vitamins A, C, D, E, B₆ (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B₁₂ (cobalamin), pantothenic acid, phosphorous, magnesium, and zinc. When fortification nutrients are added to cereals, they will either be listed directly in the ingredients statement or in the ingredients statement under "Vitamins and Minerals."

All fortified cereals must contain the five enrichment nutrients. However, manufacturers can choose which additional nutrients to use for fortification. Different cereal brands may list different fortification nutrients. The USDA does not specify a minimum number of nutrients or a minimum percentage for the level of fortification in breakfast cereals.

Cooked or RTE breakfast cereals that are 100 percent whole grain are not required to be fortified.

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DETERMINING IF A BREAKFAST CEREAL IS FORTIFIED

This product label shows an example of a fortified breakfast cereal that meets the USDA WGR requirements.

- This cereal is enriched because the “Vitamins and Minerals” section of the ingredients statement lists the five enrichment nutrients:
 - iron;
 - thiamin (vitamin B₁ (thiamin mononitrate));
 - riboflavin (vitamin B₂);
 - niacin (niacinamide); and
 - folic acid.

- This cereal is fortified because the “Vitamins and Minerals” section of the ingredients statement lists seven other nutrients that are not naturally present in the whole-grain oats but have been added to the cereal. These include calcium (calcium carbonate), zinc, vitamin C (sodium ascorbate), vitamin A (palmitate), vitamin D₃, vitamin B₆ (pyridoxine hydrochloride), and vitamin B₁₂.

- This cereal contains “whole grain oats” as the first ingredient.

This cereal meets the WGR criteria for creditable breakfast cereals because it is fortified and contains a whole grain as the first ingredient.

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size: 1 cup (28g)		Servings Per Container about 20	
Children Under 4 – ¾ cup (21 g)		Children Under 4 about 27	
Amount Per Serving	Cheerios	With ½ cup skim milk	Cereal for Children Under 4
Calories	100	140	80
Calories from Fat	15	20	10
% Daily Value**			
Total Fat 2g*	3%	3%	1.5g
Saturated Fat 0g	0%	0%	0g
Trans Fat 0g			0g
Polyunsaturated Fat 0.5g			0g
Monounsaturated Fat 0.5 g			0g
Cholesterol 0mg	0%	1%	0g
Sodium 160mg	7%	9%	120 mg
Potassium 170mg	5%	11%	130 mg
Total Carbohydrate 20 g	7%	9%	15g
Dietary Fiber 3g	11%	11%	2g
Soluble Fiber 1g			0g
Sugars 1g			1g
Other Carbohydrate 16 g			12g
Protein 3g			2g
			% Daily Value**
Protein	—	—	9%
Vitamin A	10%	15%	10%
Vitamin C	10%	10%	10%
Calcium	10%	25%	8%
Iron	45%	45%	50%
Vitamin D	10%	25%	6%
Thiamin	25%	30%	35%
Riboflavin	25%	35%	35%
Niacin	25%	25%	35%
Vitamin B ₆	25%	25%	45%
Folic Acid	50%	50%	60%
Vitamin B ₁₂	25%	35%	30%
Phosphorous	10%	25%	8%
Magnesium	10%	10%	10%
Zinc	25%	30%	30%
* Amount in cereal. A serving of cereal plus skim milk provides 2 g total, less than 5 mg cholesterol, 220mg sodium, 360 mg potassium, 26g total carbohydrate (7g sugars, 17g other carbohydrates) and 8g protein.			
** Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:			
	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Potassium		3,500mg	3,500mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g
Protein		50g	65g

Ingredients: **Whole grain oats** (includes the oat bran), modified corn starch, sugar, salt, tripotassium phosphate, wheat starch, vitamin E (mixed tocopherols) added to preserve freshness.

Vitamins and Minerals: Calcium carbonate, **iron**, zinc (mineral nutrients), vitamin C (sodium ascorbate), a B vitamin (**niacinamide**), vitamin B₆ (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin A (palmitate), vitamin B₂ (**riboflavin**), vitamin B₁ (**thiamin mononitrate**), a B vitamin (**folic acid**), vitamin B₁₂, vitamin D₃.

NONCREDITABLE CEREALS

The combined weight of any noncreditable grains in breakfast cereals (such as fiber, bran, germ, and modified food starch, including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours) cannot exceed 6.99 grams. Products that exceed this limit do not meet the WGR requirement, except for fortified breakfast cereals that contain a whole grain as the first ingredient. These cereals not required to limit the amount of noncreditable grains. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, [Criteria for Whole Grain-rich Foods](#).

Cereal products that contain only enriched grains, bran, or germ do not credit toward the grains component in the NSLP and SBP. They can only be served as extra foods. Examples of noncreditable cereals include enriched cream of wheat, enriched farina, 100 percent bran cereal, and wheat germ. Menu planners must consider whether these foods are practical for school meals because they cannot credit toward the minimum daily or weekly grains but must still count toward the weekly dietary specifications for calories, fat, and sodium.

Bran Cereals

Bran is a noncreditable grain ingredient. RTE breakfast cereals that contain 100 percent bran are not creditable, even if they are fortified. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a noncreditable bran cereal.

Ingredients: **WHEAT BRAN**, sugar, malt flavor, contains 2% or less of salt. **Vitamins and Minerals:** Calcium carbonate, vitamin C (sodium ascorbate and ascorbic acid), reduced iron, niacinamide, vitamin B₆ (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B₂ (riboflavin), folic acid, vitamin B₁ (thiamin hydrochloride), vitamin A palmitate, vitamin B₁₂, vitamin D.



Small amounts of bran used as processing aids are allowable in RTE breakfast cereals if they do not exceed 6.99 grams per serving. Cereals such as raisin bran or bran flakes that contain more than 6.99 grams of bran are creditable if the cereal is fortified and contains a whole grain as the first ingredient. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a creditable raisin bran cereal that meets these two criteria.

Ingredients: **WHOLE-GRAIN WHEAT**, raisins, **WHEAT BRAN**, sugar, brown sugar syrup, contains 2% or less of salt, malt flavor. **Vitamins and Minerals:** Potassium chloride, niacinamide, reduced iron, vitamin B₆ (pyridoxine hydrochloride), zinc oxide, vitamin B₂ (riboflavin), vitamin B₁ (thiamin hydrochloride), vitamin A palmitate, folic acid, vitamin D, vitamin B₁₂.



For more information, see the CSDE's [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#) and [Crediting Foods](#) Web page.

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RESOURCES

Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/nslp/crediting/graincalc.pdf

Crediting Enriched Grains:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/nslp/crediting/enrichedgrains.pdf

Crediting Foods (CSDE Web Page):

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=333796

Criteria for Whole Grain-rich Foods:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/nslp/crediting/wgrcriteria.pdf

Food Buying Guide for School Meal Programs:

www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-school-meal-programs

Identifying Whole Grains:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/nslp/crediting/identifyingwg.pdf

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=334320

Product Formulation Statements:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/nslp/crediting/pfs.pdf

USDA Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in School Meals:

www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/PFSgrains13-14.pdf

Whole Grain Resource for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs:

www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/wholegrainresource.pdf

Whole Grain-rich Ounce Equivalents for School Nutrition Programs:

www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grainsozeq.pdf



For more information, see the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#) and [Meal Patterns](#) and [Crediting Foods](#) Web pages or contact the [school nutrition programs](#) staff in the CSDE Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457.

This handout is available at www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/nslp/crediting/creditecereals.pdf.

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- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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