



Tips for Better Cereal Choices

Start small. Instead of serving your child the cereal with the most sugar, gradually choose cereals with a little less sugar. Work your way through the different cereals until you get to a healthy option. Check out the [cereal spectrum](#) to help guide you.

Mix it up. If your child is used to eating a high-sugar cereal, try a lightly sweetened whole grain cereal, or try mixing a high-sugar cereal and a low-sugar cereal. Gradually add less sugary cereal into the mix.

Switch to dessert. Serve the sugary cereals as dessert. Instead of taking them away completely, allow your kids to have their favorite sugary cereal as a treat after dinner.

Sweeten the deal. Buy non-sugary cereals and add sweeter items to the mix. Try dried or fresh berries, bananas, or peaches. Even when your child adds sugar at the table, they still won't add as much sugar as the sugary cereals contain.

Add heat. As an alternative to cold cereal, try out some hot cereal recipes using fruit, nuts, and different types of grains. There are numerous recipes out there, and hot cereal allows for a lot of creativity. However, stay away from the pre-packaged oatmeal packets which contain just as much sugar as sugar cereals, and are high in sodium.

Be a model. Eat the non-sugary, whole-grain cereal with your kids. Modeling the behavior you want your kids to engage in might encourage them to do the same.

Teach them. Your kids might not be able to understand everything on the nutrition label, but you can still show them how much sugar is added to sugary cereals. Show them our Cereal FACTS video, or do it yourself! Every four grams of sugar is equal to one teaspoon. Measure out a typical serving of cereal and then measure out the amount of sugar in that cereal. You can also make a game out of finding all the ingredients that are really just sugar. All of these are just other names for sugar:

Agave Nectar	Glucose	Molasses
Brown Sugar	High-fructose corn syrup	Raw sugar
Corn Sweetener	Honey	Sucrose
Corn Syrup	Invert sugar	Sugar
Dextrose	Lactose	Syrup
Fructose	Maltose	
Fruit juice concentrates	Malt syrup	

Provide options. You can limit the purchase of sugary cereals, but that doesn't mean you can't let your kids choose the cereal they want. Try showing them the healthier cereal options and giving them a choice. They may be more likely to eat the cereal they chose themselves.

Choose fiber. Choose cereals with at least 3 grams of fiber per serving, they are more filling and usually have more flavor. Use the tips listed above to make gradual changes that will improve the nutritional punch of your child's breakfast.

The Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity has other resources about marketing cereals to children.

For more information go to: www.cerealfacts.org