



2013 Cereals Snapshot

CHILDREN'S FOOD & BEVERAGE ADVERTISING INITIATIVE • MAY 2013

Introduction. Participants in the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI) continue to improve the nutritional quality of ready-to-eat cereals (RTE) advertised to children. Foods in this category have changed significantly since 2009 when the commitments of all the cereal company participants went fully into effect. The CFBAI participants have changed the recipes of many cereals, reducing sugars, calories and sodium and increasing whole grains, fiber, or vitamins and minerals. This snapshot reports on the nutrition content of 22 cereals on the CFBAI's [May 2013 product list](#).¹ For more information about the CFBAI, visit <http://www.bbb.org/us/CFBAI>.

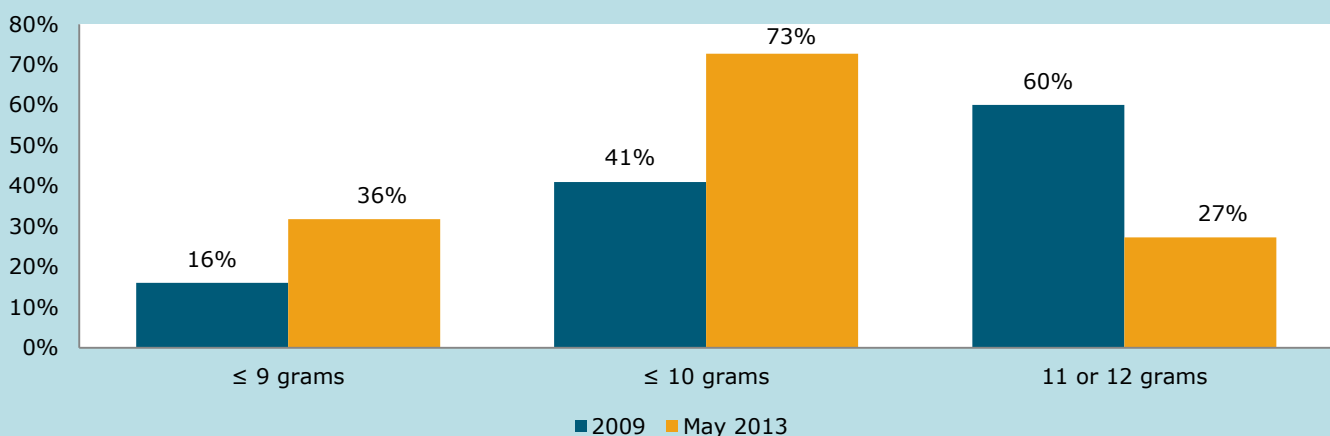
CFBAI participants have steadily reduced sugars and other nutrients to limit in cereals advertised to children

The participants' cereals contain a modest amount of calories and sodium and little or no saturated or *trans* fats.

- **Calories.** Twenty-one of the cereals have labeled serving sizes in the 1 ounce range (27-33 grams). All of them contain no more than 130 calories and 43% contain no more than 110 calories. One cereal has a 54 gram serving size and contains 190 calories.
- **Trans fat.** All have 0 grams of *trans* fat.
- **Saturated fat.** Fifty percent contain 0 grams of saturated fat, 82% contain no more than 0.5 grams and none exceed 1 gram.
- **Sodium.** None exceed 190 mg sodium, and 77% contain no more than 170 mg.

The participants are steadily reducing the sugar content of the cereals they advertise to children and now almost three-fourths (73%) of the cereals contain no more than 10 grams per serving. Further, now, more than one-third (36%) have no more than 9 grams per serving, more than twice as many as in 2009. Before the CFBAI started, some cereals advertised to children had 15 or 16 grams of sugars per serving. As seen in Table 1, in 2009, many cereals had 11 or 12 grams of sugars per serving. In contrast, in 2013, less than one-third (27%) contain these amounts. (One cereal in the 11-12 grams group is a heavier, denser cereal with a 54 gram serving, while the others contain 27-33 grams.)

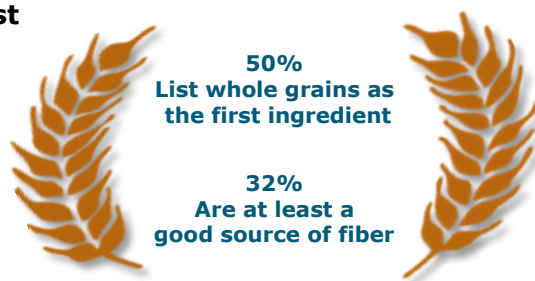
Table 1. Sugar Content of Cereals 2009 to May 2013



Cereals CFBAI participants advertise to children are good sources of whole grains, fiber, or vitamins and minerals

Now one-half of the cereals list whole grains as the first ingredient in the ingredients statement, up from one-third in fall 2012.² Most of the cereals (73%) contain at least 8 grams of whole grains and more than a third (36%) now contain at least 12 grams.

About one-third (32%) of the cereals also contain at least a “good” source (10 to 19% of the government-established Daily Value) of fiber.



The participants’ cereals contain at least a “good” source of nutrients that the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010 call “nutrients of public health concern” (calcium, fiber, potassium, vitamin D). All contain at least a good source of one nutrient of concern and 64% are a good source of at least *two* of these nutrients.

- Calcium. More than one-third (36%) are a good source of calcium.
- Vitamin D. All but one cereal are a good source of vitamin D and almost one-fourth (23%) are an excellent source (at least 20% DV) of vitamin D.

RTE cereals that are advertised as part of the CFBAI are nutrient rich foods, contain modest amounts of calories and nutrients to limit, and can contribute to a healthy diet

A growing body of research indicates that children, who eat RTE cereal, presweetened or non-presweetened, tend to have healthier body weights than those who do not eat cereal. For example, a 2013 study confirmed the positive association between RTE cereal consumption in children and healthier body weights compared to children who skip breakfast or eat a different breakfast.³

Looking ahead. In 2013, many cereals that the CFBAI participants advertise to children are even more nutritious than before. The December 2013 implementation date of CFBAI’s [new uniform nutrition criteria](#) for foods advertised to children, which include a no-more-than-10-grams-of-sugars-per-serving criterion for cereals (those under 150 calories), will lead to further improvements in this food category.

¹ This Fact Sheet updates the October 2012 Cereal Fact Sheet. The listing of cereals has changed (two cereals were added, one was deleted) and the nutritional content of others changed somewhat.

² The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010* (DGA 2010) advise that half of all grains consumed be whole grains and the minimum amount recommended for many people is about 3 ounce-equivalents (48 grams) per day. The DGA 2010 also considers 8 grams to be a significant amount. See <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/DGAs2010-PolicyDocument.htm> at p. 36. According to the DGA 2010,

“[w]hole grains are a source of nutrients, such as iron, magnesium, selenium, B vitamins, and dietary fiber. Whole grains vary in their dietary fiber content. . . . Consuming enough whole grains helps meet nutrient needs. Choosing whole grains that are higher in dietary fiber has additional health benefits.” *Id.*

³ K. Miller, *et al.*, The Association Between Body Metrics and Breakfast Food Choice in Children, *INFANT, CHILD & ADOLESCENT NUTRITION* (Feb. 2013) (the study defined presweetened cereals as ≥ 9 grams sugar per serving), *available at* <http://can.sagepub.com/content/5/1/43.abstract>; see also A.M. Albertson *et al.*, The Relationship between Ready-to-Eat Cereal Consumption Categorized by Sugar Content and Body Measures in American Children: Results from NHANES 2001-06, 23 *FASEB J.* 550.22 (April 2009) (Meeting Abstracts); A.M. Albertson *et al.*, Ready-to-Eat Cereal Consumption: Its Relationship with BMI and Nutrient Intake of Children aged 4 to 12 years, *J AM DIET ASSOC.* 103.12 (2003): 1613-1619.