Healthy eating messages may have convinced many of us to ditch the fry up and switch to the lighter option of a bowlful of cereal but our research shows this nutritious image could be hiding the reality when it comes to sugar, salt and saturated fat. We found that you could be breakfasting on as much sugar as you would find in a chocolate bar and the same amount of salt as in a packet of crisps.

That’s worrying enough for adults. But according to market research company Mintel, eight out of ten children eat cereal regularly. And the products marketed directly at children were among the worst offenders for sugar. At a time when there is growing concern about childhood obesity and diet-related disease in general, that’s simply not good enough.
Which? wants to see cereal manufacturers take a more responsible approach. They must:

- Stop marketing products high in fat, sugar or salt to children
- Stop making health claims on products high in fat, sugar or salt
- Help consumers to identify the amounts of fat, sugar, salt and saturates in their foods by applying the FSA's traffic light labelling system to their products
- Make further cuts to salt levels, reduce fat (including saturates) and sugar and remove trans fats
WHAT’S IN YOUR BOWL?

Between March and May 2006 we scoured the leading supermarkets – Asda, Morrisons, Sainsbury’s and Tesco – and filled our baskets with 275 different types and flavours of cereals. We concentrated on standard products and healthy eating ranges. We looked at the amounts of sugar, salt and fat they contain and compared them to the Food Standards Agency’s (FSA) proposed criteria for front-of-pack traffic light labelling.

We were shocked to discover that more than 75 per cent of the cereals in our basket had a high level of sugar, while almost a fifth had high levels of salt. Nearly 90 per cent of the cereals in our sample that targeted children were high in sugar, 13 per cent were high in salt and 10 per cent were high in saturated fat. While some manufacturers have introduced reduced sugar and salt versions of their cereals – which is a positive step – we found that they can still contain high levels.

LITTLE PROGRESS

Despite widespread public concern about obesity and diet-related disease, cereals are almost as sugary now as when we looked at 100 branded cereals two years ago. Based on previous FSA criteria from 2004, 79 per cent contained ‘a lot’ of sugar compared with 85 per cent when we checked in 2004. Some cereals are still high in fat or contain hydrogenated vegetable oil, which means that trans fats might be an ingredient. This type of fat may be worse for you than saturated fat. More encouragingly, based on the 2004 criteria, the proportion of extremely salty cereals has fallen, from 40 per cent containing ‘a lot’ in 2004 to 28 per cent now.

Take action

Which? has produced a wallet-size Food Shopping Card to help people make sense of labels that don’t include traffic light labelling. You can get hold of one by visiting www.which.co.uk/shoppingcard
FACT:
Adults and children aged 11 years or over should aim to eat no more than 6g of salt a day.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS
In March this year, the FSA agreed the principles for a new front-of-pack labelling scheme. This was based on nearly two years of research into what nutrition information shoppers want and in which format. The new scheme is based on a traffic light system, using red, amber and green symbols to show whether levels of sugar, fat, saturated fat and salt are high, medium or low. So far, Asda, the Co-operative Group, Sainsbury’s and Waitrose have said they will use the scheme. Recent Which? research found that this type of labelling scheme was most helpful to consumers.

“We investigated 275 products, including own-brand and big names. In 2004, we looked at 100 of the best-selling branded cereals.”

We grouped our cereals into 12 main types – such as cereal flakes, muesli and oats and then looked at cereals specifically targeted at children. We applied the FSA’s proposed nutritional criteria for the traffic lights to highlight the different nutrients. We focused on comparing different cereals based on the information provided by the manufacturer for nutrients per 100g rather than the suggested serving. Food companies suggest different serving sizes and some include milk in their calculations. We also looked at the information for what manufacturers suggest as a serving where relevant.

PERCENTAGE OF CEREALS WITH A ‘RED’ LIGHT

We investigated 275 products, including own-brand and big names. In 2004, we looked at 100 of the best-selling branded cereals. We grouped our cereals into 12 main types – such as cereal flakes, muesli and oats and then looked at cereals specifically targeted at children. We applied the FSA’s proposed nutritional criteria for the traffic lights to highlight the different nutrients. We focused on comparing different cereals based on the information provided by the manufacturer for nutrients per 100g rather than the suggested serving. Food companies suggest different serving sizes and some include milk in their calculations. We also looked at the information for what manufacturers suggest as a serving where relevant.

Go to www.which.co.uk/cereals for the full results, showing the fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt levels for every cereal we bought.
A staggering 76 per cent of the cereals we bought get a red light for sugar. Just 13 per cent are green, with 10 per cent rating amber.

Of the 52 cereals that target children, a massive 88 per cent get a red light for sugar.

“I am appalled at the range of high sugar breakfast cereals with kids’ type characters, i.e. Coco Pops, Frosties and Honey Nut Loops. And I’m outraged at the new chocolate straws. Anyone involved in this advertising and manufacturing should be ashamed”.

Kellie-Jay, Bristol

The five worst offenders contained ten or more teaspoons of sugar per 100g. Three of these cereals are aimed at children: Asda Golden Puffs, Sainsbury’s Golden Puffs and Kellogg’s Ricicles. And four of the five – all puffed wheat cereals – have more sugar per 100g than a Toffee Crisp (47.9g).

**A SPOONFUL OF SUGAR**

**SERVING SIZES**

We found nine cereals with more than four teaspoons of sugar (16g) per suggested portion. Several of the most sugary were mueslis where a lot of the sugar can come from dried fruit. This counts towards your five portions of fruit and vegetables a day and also contains fibre and some vitamins and minerals. So there are benefits over added sugar, but it is still worth watching the sugar levels as fruit sugars still have the same number of calories and can contribute to tooth decay. Some types of muesli are sweetened by adding sugar as well.

**A bowlful of sugar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cereal</th>
<th>Sugar (g/portion)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asda 55% Fruit Muesli</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sainsbury’s Fruit Muesli</td>
<td>17.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrisons Fruit &amp; Nut Muesli</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sainsbury’s Yoghurtly and Raspberry Crisp Cereal</td>
<td>16.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordans Special Fruit Muesli</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asda Golden Puffs</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrisons Golden Puffs</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tesco Healthy Living Muesli</td>
<td>16.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sainsbury’s Triple Chocolate Crisp Cereal</td>
<td>16.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sugar: the worst offenders**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cereal</th>
<th>Sugar (g/100g)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asda Golden Puffs</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrisons Golden Puffs</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sainsbury’s Golden Puffs</td>
<td>49.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tesco Golden Honey Puffs</td>
<td>49.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kellogg’s Ricicles</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“**The five worst offenders contained ten or more teaspoons of sugar per 100g**”
You might be surprised to discover that eating cereals can mean swallowing a lot of salt along with the sugar. Too much salt can raise your blood pressure, increasing your risk of heart disease and stroke. But most of us – 85 per cent of men and 69 per cent of women – eat too much. You should aim to have no more than 6g of salt a day. Levels for children are lower: 1 to 3 year olds should have no more than 2g a day; 4 to 6 year olds no more than 3g; and 7 to 10 year olds 5g.

Nearly a fifth of the cereals we looked at get a red light for salt. It’s worrying that seven of these target children: Asda Choco Flakes, Asda Frosted Flakes, Kellogg’s Rice Krispies, Sainsbury’s Choco Flakes, Sainsbury’s Choco Snaps, Sainsbury’s Frosted Flakes and Sainsbury’s Hooplas.

There has been an overall reduction in salt levels since we last looked at breakfast cereals in 2004, but further cuts are still needed.

**SALT: the worst offenders**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Salt (g/100g)</th>
<th>Salt (g/serving)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kellogg’s All-Bran</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrisons Right Balance</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nestlé Golden Grahams</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With Kellogg’s All-Bran and Morrisons Right Balance topping the salt tables on a per serving basis, and a bowlful of five of the six high-fibre bran cereals containing more than a bag of crisps, it’s difficult to swallow the healthy image of these cereals. Shoppers who want the benefits of a high-fibre cereal shouldn’t have to eat so much salt every morning.
FAT FACTS

The fat content of cereals across the board is generally medium to low – just two cereals get a red light. The Sainsbury’s Crunchy Oat Cereal with 20.3g of fat per 100g gives you almost the same amount of fat and saturated fat as the supermarket’s thick pork sausages. And with 28.5g fat per 100g, the suggested amount of Jordan’s Country Crisp Four Nut Combo contains around the same amount of fat as a McDonald’s McBacon Roll.

SATURATED FAT
Eating too much saturated fat can push up blood cholesterol levels, increasing your risk of heart disease. Cereals in general don’t present too much of a problem, but it’s important to check the label – 7 per cent of the ones we looked at have a high level of saturates. Most of these are of the crunchy variety, but five children’s cereals also have high levels of this type of fat: Mornflake Pecan and Maple Crisp; Kellogg’s Coco Pops Straws; Quaker Oatso Simple for Kids Super Strawberry, Terrific Toffee and Very Vanilla.

FIBRE
Many of the packets of cereal we looked at promote the benefits of wholegrains. Wholegrains haven’t had any of the cereal grain taken away during manufacturing, so you’ll get more nutrients and more soluble fibre – this can help keep your heart healthy. Wholegrain foods also keep you feeling full for longer, which may stop you reaching for a snack mid-morning. And they provide insoluble fibre – this helps to avoid constipation. Foods with more than 6g per 100g of fibre are classed as ‘high in fibre’.
SERVING SIZES
Three of the cereals will give you at least 4g of saturates per bowl if you follow the suggestion on the label – around the same amount as you’d find in two fried eggs.

A bowl of fat
Cereals with 4g or more of saturates per serving

TRANS FATS
If you see ‘hydrogenated vegetable oil’ or ‘hydrogenated vegetable fat’ listed in the ingredients panel, the food may contain trans fats. These are produced artificially when manufacturers bubble hydrogen through liquid oils to turn them into solid fats. They have a similar effect on your body to saturates – some experts believe they may be even worse for you than saturated fat. But manufacturers don’t have to tell you if their product contains trans fats. We found 11 cereals that list hydrogenated fat as an ingredient and five of these are specifically targeted at children.

Asda Choco Squares
Asda Good For You Fruit Muesli
Asda Smart Price Fruit and Fibre
Mornflake Chocolatey Squares
Quaker Oatso Simple For Kids Super Strawberry
Quaker Oatso Simple For Kids Terrific Toffee
Quaker Oatso Simple For Kids Very Vanilla
Sainsbury’s Be Good To Yourself Precise
Sainsbury’s Muesli
Sainsbury’s Yoghurt and Raspberry Crisp Cereal
Tesco Fruit and Nut Muesli

GOOD FOR YOU?
Oats tend to have more of a healthy image among cereals because they’re a good source of soluble fibre, which can help lower blood cholesterol. If you’ve got children, you might go for Quaker’s Oatso Simple for Kids, with its child-friendly flavours: Super Strawberry, Terrific Toffee and Very Vanilla. But these varieties contain high levels of saturates – 5.5 to 6g per 100g. You’d be better off going for the Original (plain) flavour and sweetening it with some fruit. Muesli also has a healthy image, but Asda’s 55% Fruit and Nut Muesli has 5g saturates per 100g.
A HEALTHY START TO YOUR DAY?

It’s easy to spot any potential nutritional benefits of breakfast cereals – the manufacturers print their claims in big colourful letters, such as “fortified with vitamins and iron”, “high in fibre”, and “wholegrain”. Currently there’s no mandatory check on the health claims made for foods before products hit the shops.

- Nestlé Finesses and Nestlé Finesses & Fruit are both high in sugar, but they claim, respectively, to be 99 per cent or 98 per cent fat free.
- Kellogg’s Special K, Special K Peach and Apricot, Special K Purple Berries and Special K Red Berries all claim to be 99 per cent fat free. All four cereals get a red light for both sugar and salt.
- Asda Good For You Fruit Muesli and Sainsbury’s Be Good To Yourself Precise both contain hydrogenated fat.
- Tesco Healthyliving Bran Flakes and Sainsbury’s Be Good To Yourself Balance get red lights for both sugar and salt.
- Nestlé Golden Grahams contain 0.75g of salt per serving – the same amount you’d find in a 50g serving of KP Nuts original salted peanuts. But the back of the packet makes this look like a healthy cereal by explaining the ‘goodness of wholegrains’ which contain ‘essential nutrients working together to help keep you and your family healthy from the inside out’.
- Sainsbury’s Be Good To Yourself Wheat Flakes with Added Oat Bran gets a red light for sugar, but the packet carries a cholesterol-lowering claim.
- Nestlé Force gets a red light for salt but carries a wholegrain claim.
- Weetabix Weetaflakes Raisin, Cranberry and Apple claims that the prebiotic ingredient can ‘help maintain a healthy digestive system’, but the cereal gets a red light for sugar.

TIGHTER LAWS ON HEALTH CLAIMS

Which? has been campaigning to ban health and nutrition claims on products high in sugar, fat, saturates or salt and for health claims to be checked before the food hits the shops. In May we scored a major victory when the European Parliament voted to ban misleading health claims on food. All new claims will now have to be registered with the European Food Safety Authority, which will check claims before the food hits the shops. And health claims won’t be allowed on foods high in fat, sugar or salt. But don’t relax too soon – it could be up to two years before the new laws take full effect, so until then, you still have to read the labels closely. For more information about what the new rules will mean go to our web-site: www.which.co.uk/food

“The European Food Safety Authority will check claims before the food hits the shops”
FACT:
Some cereals just give nutrition information for the cereal; others include the milk you pour on. This makes it hard for shoppers to compare.

THE BEST & THE WORST OF THE BUNCH

We assessed which cereals were the best and worst for each cereal type we looked at based on the FSA’s proposed traffic light labelling criteria for fat, saturates, sugar and salt.

CRUNCH

The downside
All of the crunchy cereals have a red light for sugar. There’s a big range from 17g per 100g in Asda Passion Fruit Crisp to 33g per 100g in Kellogg’s Crunchy Nut Nutty. None are low in fat and 50 per cent have a red light for saturates – more than any other type of cereal we looked at. One – Sainsbury’s Yoghurty & Raspberry Crisp Cereal – contains hydrogenated fat.

Benefits
The oats in these cereals contain soluble fibre, which can help keep your heart healthy. Many of the crunch cereals are high in fibre.

Best of the bunch:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quaker Oat Granola</th>
<th>per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar:</td>
<td>26g ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat:</td>
<td>8.8g ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates:</td>
<td>2.8g ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt:</td>
<td>trace ●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Worst of the bunch:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jordans Crispy Four Nut Combo</th>
<th>per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar:</td>
<td>24.8g ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat:</td>
<td>28.5g ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates:</td>
<td>6.6g ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt:</td>
<td>0.6g ●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FLAKES

The downside
This is a salty group of cereals – 49 per cent have high (red) salt levels. Cereal flakes account for 20 of the 28 cereals with more salt than a bag of crisps, and a serving of Morrisons Right Balance has more salt than 50g of salted peanuts.

Most of these cereals are very sweet too, 83 per cent get a red light for sugar. Again, the cereals with a red light for sugar have very different levels. 15.7g per 100g in Sainsbury’s Be Good to Yourself Balance to 39g per 100g in Asda Raisin Bran.

Two cereals – Asda Smart Price Fruit and Fibre and Sainsbury’s Be Good To Yourself Precise – contain hydrogenated fat.

Benefits
These cereals offer a lower-fat option than some of the other types we looked at – there are no red traffic lights for fat or saturates. 71 per cent of the traffic lights for fat and 86 per cent of the traffic lights for saturates are green. Some types, such as bran flakes, fruit and fibre and sultana bran, are high in fibre.
Best of the bunch:

**Asda Good for You**

**Apple, Blackberry & Raspberry Flakes**

per 100g

Sugar: 8g
Fat: 1.8g
Saturates: 0.4g
Salt: 0.75g

We found that Weetabix Weetaflakes also has the same balance of traffic lights, but the Asda cereal has lower figures overall.

Worst of the bunch:

**Kellogg’s Fruit ‘n’ Fibre**

per 100g

Sugar: 25g
Fat: 6g
Saturates: 3.5g
Salt: 1.5g

**Kellogg’s All-Bran Bran Flakes Yoghurt**

per 100g

Sugar: 26g
Fat: 5g
Saturates: 2g
Salt: 1.8g

**Nestlé Fibre 1**

per 100g

Sugar: 13.8g
Fat: 2.8g
Saturates: 0.5g
Salt: 0.8g

**Worst of the bunch:**

Kellogg’s All-Bran contains the highest amount of salt, but is lower in fat than some of the other cereals.

**Sainsbury’s High Fibre Bran**

per 100g

Sugar: 16.2g
Fat: 3.5g
Saturates: 0.7g
Salt: 1.7g

**Tesco Hi-Fibre Bran**

per 100g

Sugar: 16.2g
Fat: 3.5g
Saturates: 0.7g
Salt: 1.75g

**Asda High Bran**

per 100g

Sugar: 16g
Fat: 3.5g
Saturates: 0.7g
Salt: 1.65g

**Morrisons High Fibre Bran**

per 100g

Sugar: 16.2g
Fat: 3.5g
Saturates: 0.7g
Salt: 1.7g

**HIGH FIBRE BRAN**

**The downside**

Five of the six cereals in this group are high in salt – if you eat the suggested serving sizes of any of them you’ll get more salt than you’d get from a bag of crisps. Kellogg’s All-Bran, with the highest level of salt per serving (more than a 50g bag of salted peanuts) is also in this group.

**Benefits**

These cereals are high in fibre. None contains hydrogenated fat.

Best of the bunch

Five of the six cereals are nutritionally very similar per 100g for sugar, fat and saturates. Nestlé Fibre 1 and Kellogg’s All-Bran are the only cereals with a green light for fat, although there’s not a big difference between the fat content of these and the other cereals.

**Nestlé Fibre 1**

per 100g

Sugar: 13.8g
Fat: 2.8g
Saturates: 0.5g
Salt: 0.8g
THE BEST & THE WORST OF THE BUNCH (continued)

HOOPS

The downside
All of these cereals get a red light for sugar, but there's a big range – from 16.6g per 100g in Quaker Oat Hoops to 37g per 100g in Asda Choco Hoops. None of these cereals has a green light for salt.

Benefits
All of the cereals get a green light for saturates. None contains hydrogenated fats.

Best of the bunch:
Kellogg's Honey Nut Loops has the same balance of traffic lights as Weetabix Weetos Honey, but higher figures overall.

Sainsbury's Hooplas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>21.5g ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>3.8g ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates</td>
<td>0.6g ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>1.5g ●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tesco Multigrain Hoops

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>21.5g ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>3.8g ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates</td>
<td>0.6g ●</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>1.5g ●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Worst of the bunch:
Sainsbury’s Hooplas and Tesco Multigrain Hoops have red lights for both sugar and salt. Asda Choco Hoops and Nestlé Honey Nut Cheerios have just one red light, for sugar, but contain 37g and 35.4g sugar per 100g respectively. However, the Asda Choco Hoops have around half as much salt.

MALTED WHEAT

The downside
All but two of the plain versions of these cereals get a red light for sugar with around 15g per 100g – although the two that don’t have levels only marginally below the others. The sugared versions, Nestlé Cocoa Shreddies and Nestlé Frosted Shreddies, contain around 29g per 100g sugar, almost twice as much as the company’s plain variety. None of the cereals get a green light for salt – all are amber.

Benefits
All of the cereals are low in both fat and saturates. None contains hydrogenated fats, and all of them are high in fibre.
**MUESLI**

**The downside**
Muesli has a healthy image, although all but four of the varieties we looked at (88 per cent) are high in sugar. A handful of brands are low in fat, although most get an amber light and some of them contain hydrogenated fats.

**Benefits**
In general these cereals are low in saturates and high in fibre. Oats are a key ingredient, which means you’ll get the benefits of soluble fibre. Other ingredients – such as dried fruit – also provide fibre.

If you like the benefits of lots of fruit and nuts in your muesli, remember that the sugar and fat levels will be higher. Try to go for no added sugar varieties so that any sugar comes from fruit.
THE BEST & THE WORST OF THE BUNCH (continued)

OATS

The downside
There are no real downsides to the plain varieties, although the plain instant oats get an amber light for fat because they contain lecithin – an ingredient used as a stabiliser which is usually produced from soya oil. Flavoured versions of the instant oats are all high in sugar, as well as higher in fat, depending on what’s been added. The Oatso Simple For Kids range contains hydrogenated vegetable fat.

Benefits
Plain oats are low in sugar, fat, saturates and salt, plus they contain cholesterol-lowering soluble fibre. Most of the oats and oat cereals are high in fibre.

Best of the bunch:
Any brand of plain oats (where oats are the only ingredient).

Worst of the bunch:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quaker Oatso Simple Kids (any flavour)</th>
<th>per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar: 32g</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat: 12-13g</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates: 5.5-6.0g</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt: Trace</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contains hydrogenated vegetable fat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PUFFED WHEAT

The downside
The sweetened varieties are very high in sugar – all get a red light and four of the five have more sugar per 100g than a four-finger milk chocolate Kit Kat (48.2g per 100g).

Benefits
The plain puffed wheat cereals we looked at are low in sugar, fat, saturates and salt – although Morrisons puffed Wheat just nudges into the amber category for fat (by 0.3g per 100g). The sugared varieties are also low in fat, saturates and salt, and none of the cereals contains hydrogenated fat.

Best of the bunch:
There’s little between Quaker Puffed Wheat, Tesco Puffed Wheat and Sainsbury’s Puffed Wheat, and all are high in fibre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quaker Puffed Wheat</th>
<th>per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar: 2g</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat: 2.5g</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates: 0.5g</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt: 0.05g</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tesco Puffed Wheat</th>
<th>per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar: 3.0g</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat: 3.0g</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates: 0.5g</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt: 0g</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sainsbury’s Puffed Wheat</th>
<th>per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar: 3g</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat: 3g</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates: 0.5g</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt: &lt;0.1g</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Worst of the bunch:
There's little between Asda Golden Puffs and Morrisons Golden Puffs.

Asda Golden Puffs
per 100g
Sugar: 55g
Fat: 1.2g
Saturates: 0.3g
Salt: Trace

Morrisons Golden Puffs
per 100g
Sugar: 55g
Fat: 1.2g
Saturates: 0.3g
Salt: 0.1g

Best of the bunch:
There's little between the plain varieties.

Nestlé Bitesize Shredded Wheat
per 100g
Sugar: 1g
Fat: 2.6g
Saturates: 0.5g
Salt: Trace

Nestlé Shredded Wheat
per 100g
Sugar: 0.9g
Fat: 2.5g
Saturates: 0.5g
Salt: Trace

Sainsbury’s Wholegrain Mini Wheats
per 100g
Sugar: 0.7g
Fat: 2.3g
Saturates: 0.5g
Salt: < 0.1g

SHREDDED WHEAT

The downside
There are no downsides to the plain varieties – all get green lights for sugar, fat, saturates and salt. Not surprisingly, the sugared or fruit-filled versions are high in sugar, with only Nestlé Triple Berry Shredded Wheat remaining on amber. But the sugar levels in many of the shredded wheat cereals we looked at remain at the lower end of the high-sugar category. Two cereals – Nestlé Fruitful Shredded Wheat and Nestlé Honey Nut Shredded Wheat – also get amber lights for fat and saturates.

Benefits
The plain varieties are a good breakfast choice with low levels of sugar, fat, saturates and salt. All of the cereals are high in fibre. None of the cereals contains hydrogenated fat.
THE BEST & THE WORST OF THE BUNCH (continued)

TOASTED RICE

The downside
The sugar content can be high – all of the sugared varieties get a red light for sugar. One of the plain cereals – Kellogg’s Rice Krispies Multigrain – is also high in sugar at 20g per 100g. Only one of the cereals – Tesco Value Rice Snaps – gets a green light for salt.

Benefits
All of the cereals are low in fat and saturates, and none of them contain hydrogenated fats. One – Kellogg’s Rice Krispies Multigrain – is high in fibre.

Best of the bunch:
Tesco Value Rice Snaps per 100g
Sugar: 4.4g ●
Fat: 0.6g ●
Saturates: 0.3g ●
Salt: 0.25g ●

Worst of the bunch:
There’s not much in it between the different chocolate-flavour rice cereals, but Kellogg’s Coco Pops have marginally higher levels of fat, saturates and salt per 100g – although a touch less sugar. Kellogg’s Ricicles are the highest in sugar.

WHEAT BISCUITS

The downside
All of the cereals get an amber light for salt, and the flavoured varieties also get a red light for sugar, plus levels of fat (and saturates for Weetabix Minis Chocolate Crisp) are higher than in the plain versions.

Benefits
The plain versions all get green lights for sugar, fat and saturates. All of the cereals are high in fibre, and none of them contains hydrogenated fat.

Best of the bunch:
There’s almost nothing in it between the plain wheat biscuits, although Sainsbury’s Basics 36 Breakfast Wheat Biscuits and Tesco Value Wheat Biscuits have slightly lower levels of sugar and saturates per 100g, and they are among those with some of the lowest levels of salt.

Sainsbury’s Basics 36 Wheat Biscuits per 100g
Sugar: 2.5g ●
Fat: 2.5g ●
Saturates: 0.4g ●
Salt: 0.7g ●

Tesco Value Wheat Biscuits per 100g
Sugar: 2.5g ●
Fat: 2.5g ●
Saturates: 0.4g ●
Salt: 0.68g ●

Worst of the bunch:
Weetabix Minis Chocolate Crisp per 100g
Sugar: 28.2g ★
Fat: 5.7g ★
Saturates: 3.8g ★
Salt: 0.95g ★
MISCELLANEOUS

This group includes cereals that don’t fit easily into any of the other groups, and which aren’t specifically marketed to children. They include cereals ranging from Nestlé Cinnamon Grahams, Morrisons Choco Dots to Tesco Breakfast Boulders. There are no overall downsides or benefits because of the diversity of the cereals in this group. But two cereals are worth highlighting for the differences in their nutrients. None of these cereals contain hydrogenated fats. Nestlé Golden Grahams was the only other cereal in this group with two reds for sugar and salt, but it has greens for fat and saturates. The salt content is, however, higher than Cinnamon Grahams.

Best of the bunch:

**Kellogg’s Kashi Original Seven Grains**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrient</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar:</td>
<td>1g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat:</td>
<td>3g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates:</td>
<td>0.4g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt:</td>
<td>Trace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Worst of the bunch:

**Nestlé Cinnamon Grahams**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrient</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar:</td>
<td>34.2g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat:</td>
<td>9.8g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates:</td>
<td>3.7g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt:</td>
<td>1.8g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CARTOONS
AND COMPETITIONS

We counted 52 cereals targeting children through methods such as free giveaways, competitions, cartoon characters or kid-friendly images.

Most of the cereals we looked at (46 out of the 52) that are marketed to children are high in sugar – just three get a green light for low sugar under the FSA guidelines: Morrisons Instant Hot Oat Cereal, Tesco Kids Wholegrain Porridge and Weetabix Ready Brek Original.

Salt was also a problem – 13 per cent got a red light for high salt. Only 29 per cent got a green light for low salt.

None of the cereals marketed to children are high in fat overall, although five are high in saturates: Mornflake Pecan & Maple Crisp, Kellogg’s Coco Pops Straws, and the three flavours of Oatso Simple for Kids. The Oatso Simple range, Asda Choco Squares and Mornflake Chocolatey Squares also contain hydrogenated fat, which means trans fats may be an ingredient.

Best of the bunch:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tesco Kids Wholegrain Porridge</th>
<th>per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>0.8g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>5.1g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates</td>
<td>0.8g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>Trace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sainsbury’s Malties</th>
<th>per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>14.7g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>1.9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates</td>
<td>0.3g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>1.1g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morrisons Instant Hot Oat Cereal</th>
<th>per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>1.8g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>8.7g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates</td>
<td>1.2g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>Trace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weetabix Ready Brek Original</th>
<th>per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>1.8g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>8.7g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates</td>
<td>1.2g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>&lt;0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Worst of the bunch:
Quaker Oatso Simple for Kids (any flavour) is high in sugar, saturates and contains hydrogenated fat, although the oats do provide fibre. Kellogg’s Coco Pops Straws and Mornflake Pecan & Maple Crisp get red lights for sugar and saturates. The Mornflake cereal also contains oats.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quaker Oatso Simple Kids (any flavour)</th>
<th>per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>32g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>12-13g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates</td>
<td>5.5-6.0g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>Trace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contains hydrogenated vegetable fat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kellogg’s Coco Pops Straws</th>
<th>per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>34g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>12g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>0.25g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mornflake Pecan &amp; Maple Crisp</th>
<th>per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sugar</td>
<td>24.9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>17.1g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturates</td>
<td>6g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>Trace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PESTER POWER

Targeting children

Our Kids’ Food campaign is calling for an end to the irresponsible marketing of unhealthy foods to children. The problem is acute: in England, one in four 11 to 15 year olds is now classed as obese, with similar trends across the UK. It’s high time the food and marketing industries acknowledged the role they play in this.

Which? is not against marketing to children in itself. But we are against the way industry uses its considerable influence to make parents’ lives harder and children’s lives less healthy using methods such as tie-ins with the latest films, free gifts and competitions.

“I know the food producers and sellers have to make money, but it’s hugely irresponsible to target children, who have no concept of what healthy food is and why they should eat it.”
Lisa, Leeds

Asda uses its own cartoon characters to appeal to kids – chocolate monsters and spaceships on its Choco Flakes, and penguins on its Frosted Flakes. But the smiling cartoon robots on the front of Asda’s Golden Puffs will attract children to a very high-sugar cereal – it contains more than 10 teaspoons of sugar per 100g.

“If only food manufacturers could use the cartoon characters and the cute shapes to promote the healthier foods. In my experience, children do not need more encouragement to eat the really sugary foods – they sell themselves! Why does healthy have to be boring?”
Ann, Bracknell

Kellogg’s entices children to its high-sugar cereals with free ice lolly makers inside packs and an advert for the film Ice Age 2. When we shopped, Kellogg’s Ricicles, fronted by Captain Rik the spaceman, carried a competition to win King Kong toys. But this cereal contains 10 teaspoons of sugar per 100g.

Packs of Kellogg’s Frosties Reduced Sugar include a free football training gadget. This cereal may have a third less sugar than regular Frosties, but it has slightly more salt.

Kellogg’s Bratz Rock Angelz cereal is a sugary advertising vehicle for the Bratz TV series and branded products such as games and dolls. But this cereal doesn’t score a single green light on the FSA scale and has a red for sugar.

Morrison targets children with pictures of the Magic Roundabout DVD and video on the front of the pack and the chance to win a trip to Florence, which could hook in parents if the kids don’t go for the bait. This promotion is carried on packs of the supermarket’s Instant Hot Oat Cereal, a better choice for kids. But it’s also on Morrisons Malties and Honey Hoops, which are high in sugar.

Mornflake Pecan & Maple Crisp targets children with its ‘Famous Five classic children’s books’ offer on the front of the box. Yet with 6g of saturates per 100g it has a red traffic light. The same offer is on the company’s high-sugar Chocolatey Squares, which contain hydrogenated fat. Its Strawberry Crisp cereal, also high in sugar, carries a promotion for toy cars.

Nestlé draws kids towards its online world of fun but the fantasy world isn’t flagged on packs of ‘School Fuel’ Shreddies – just on packs of cereals with more than twice as much sugar per 100g. The website says: ‘Check out our new packs of Golden Nuggets,'
FACT:

A serving of Kellogg’s Rice Krispies or Asda Choco Flakes would provide around a quarter of the amount of salt a three-year old should have each day.

Cookie Crisp and Nesquik for double the fun! Open the back for tons of games and quizzes.

Similarly, Nestlé’s Football Crisp carries FIFA World Cup Branding, which will appeal to soccer-mad kids. But the cereal has a high sugar content.

Quaker Oatso Simple for Kids uses bright colours and cartoon faces, but the cereal is high in sugar and saturates, and contains hydrogenated fat.

The Honey Monster peeks from behind the bowl on Quaker Sugar Puffs, which are a ‘new lower sugar variety’ with ‘less than 2 teaspoons of sugar per serving’. While this is a sizable reduction from last time we looked (35g per 100g sugar instead of 49g per 100g), it still gets a red light.

Sainsbury’s cereals target children with cartoon bowls on ice skates. Of those targeted at children, all but the Malties and Rice Pops get a red light for sugar and the supermarket’s Choco Flakes, Frosted Flakes, Hooplas and Rice Pops are high in salt too. Sainsbury’s Golden Puffs have a very high amount of sugar per 100g – around 12 teaspoons. Its Kids Wholegrain Caramel Stars Cereal with Prebiotic are also high in sugar. Even the Reduced Sugar Frosted Flakes are still high in sugar, although this cereal has less salt than the regular version.

Tesco cereals include the Tesco Kids range, which is ‘a range of healthier food and drinks’ and claims to ‘meet strict rules on fat, sugar and salt’. But Tesco Kids Multigrain Stars with Prebiotic and Tesco Kids Multigrain Cocoa Cereal with Prebiotic still get a red light for sugar. The best choice is Tesco Kids Wholegrain Porridge with Prebiotic, with green lights for sugar, saturates and salt.

Weetabix Honey or Chocolate Weetos dangle a golden carrot on the front of the packet, alongside a Wallace & Gromit competition to win an animation day for ‘you and your classmates’, a Playstation 2 and a game. Both cereals get a red light for sugar.

FURTHER DETAILS

For detailed information on the nutritional content of the featured children’s cereals, go to www.which.co.uk/cereals
JOIN OUR KIDS’ FOOD CAMPAIGN

Targeting children

We want to see responsible marketing from food companies, to help make the healthy choice an easy choice. The Government has challenged industry to tighten marketing codes for children. Communications regulator Ofcom has been asked to look at controls for TV advertising. But Which? research shows that none of Ofcom’s proposals go far enough. They wouldn’t cater for older children, just those under 10 years old, and they would still leave the way open for manufacturers to use their own cartoon characters to advertise unhealthy foods to children and during evening times when under-10s are watching the most television.

You can help by joining our campaign.
Go to www.which.co.uk/kidsfood and tell us what you think about irresponsible marketing to children.

“I am a parent and a community dietician and am exhausted in trying to combat the advertising messages that undermine my parental role and my work.”
Pam, Teignbridge

“We periodically have to ban our 5 year-old twins from watching TV in the mornings because we are fed up with the barrage of requests for junk food and junk toys, which follows.”
Hible, Corsham

“At 3 and 6 my children are starting to take close notice of packaging, particularly cereals. We choose the “healthier” options but I can already see how pester power can develop with the bribe of free toys with food products. I do have concerns as they grow older.”
Paul, Totnes

The FSA has developed a nutrient-profiling system to use with the advertising restrictions to identify which foods are high in fat, sugar and salt. The researchers at Oxford University who developed this system for the FSA looked at the cereals targeted at children we’ve included, to see whether they would be able to be advertised or not if it is used. Just 15 of the 52 cereals would be able to be advertised using the FSA model*.

FURTHER DETAILS

Which? asked best-selling author Annabel Karmel, to write some tips to help parents deal with the unhealthy marketing tricks. For your copy go to www.which.co.uk/parenttips

*Research was carried out by Dr Mike Rayner, Anna Boxer and colleagues at the British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Research Group at Oxford University. Calculations were based on the assumption that fibre was measured using the AOAC method (unless otherwise stated on the pack). The AOAC method is the one recommended by the FSA.
There has been a dramatic increase in levels of public concern about obesity and diet-related disease since we looked at cereals two years ago. But our research shows the industry has taken little action, particularly on sugar.

While manufacturers have made some efforts to reduce the salt levels in their breakfast cereals, some products are still very salty. And we still found lots of products with high levels of sugar. Despite their healthy image, some cereals also have high levels of fat and saturates and contain hydrogenated vegetable fat, which may contain trans fats. Some products even make health claims despite having high levels of sugar and salt.

We’re particularly concerned that most cereals marketed to children are still high in sugar and many are high in salt too.

Which? wants cereal manufacturers to:

- Stop marketing products high in fat, sugar or salt to children
- Stop making health claims on products high in fat, sugar and salt. EU legislation will take time to come into effect so we would like to see companies voluntarily curbing these misleading practices
- Help consumers to identify the amounts of fat, sugar, salt and saturates in their foods by applying the FSA’s traffic light labelling system to their products
- Make further cuts to salt levels, reduce fat (including saturates) and sugar and remove all unnecessary trans fats
This report highlights the best and worst options from twelve different categories of cereals. For full information on the 275 cereals Which? analysed, including how much fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt they contain and whether these levels are high, medium or low based on the Food Standards Agency’s proposed criteria for its multiple traffic light labelling scheme, go to www.which.co.uk/cereals and download our “Breakfast Breakdown”.
For further information please contact:
public_affairs@which.co.uk  Tel: 0207 770 7214.

More information can also be found on our website (www.which.co.uk/campaigns)

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Which? campaigns actively for all consumers. With around 700,000 members in the UK, we are the largest consumer organisation in Europe. Entirely independent of government and industry, we are funded through sales of our consumer magazines, online products and books.

Which? is the operational name of Consumers’ Association - a registered charity No 296072.