

POWER BREAKFASTS

Catapult your way into the day with the best energising, nutritionist-recommended brekkie choices. From low GI to high fibre, here's something to satisfy all tastes and dietary requirements



SUE RADD

This month's grocery guru is an accredited practising dietitian and founding director of Sydney's Nutrition and Wellbeing Clinic.



WHEN YOU WANT to get the most out of life, what you eat matters—particularly at breakfast. A good start increases your concentration, improves your memory and gives you a sunnier disposition, powering you up for the long day ahead.

Yet, despite its energising effects and the evidence that breakfast eaters have a lower body-mass index (meaning they're slimmer), nearly a quarter of Australians regularly skip breakfast, only to later grab unhealthy snacks. This leads to poor nutritional intake and causes struggles with waistlines.

To get your breakfast on track, start with wholegrains, which help control weight and guard against type 2 diabetes.

WINNING CEREAL CHOICES

Eating cereal is an easy, fast and cheap way to include more wholegrains in your diet. I top my wholegrain cereal with walnuts and fruit—fresh berries or dried figs—and drizzle calcium-enriched soy or low-fat dairy milk over the top. These are deliberate choices as, after age 40, it's important to make every mouthful count.

I also enjoy preparing wholegrains from scratch (think moist Bircher muesli with fresh green apple, or millet with macadamia nuts and shredded coconut). But wholesome ready-to-eat options exist, too. In fact, cereals have been around since the late 1800s and are still among the most popular breakfast picks today.

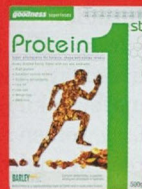
So, how do you choose from the more than 150 cereals available? For the full picture, check ingredients lists and nutrition-information panels. A cereal can sport a 'low fat' claim, but if it doesn't contain the goodness of wholegrains, it doesn't cut it. And watch out for refined cereals, which may be fortified with vitamins and minerals yet have a sugar content that's equal to that of a dessert. Here are a few more important tips to help you interpret the fine print.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CEREAL

- ▶ Hunt for brands with the highest levels of **wholegrains**.
- ▶ Pick those with at least **3 g of dietary fibre** per serve.
- ▶ Avoid cereals with more than **15 g of sugars** per 100 g (15 per cent), unless the sugars are from dried fruit.
- ▶ Choose those with **less than 120 mg of sodium** per 100 g whenever possible.

IF YOU WANT TO EAT LOW GLYCAEMIC INDEX (GI) FOODS ...

▶ **GOODNESS SUPERFOODS PROTEIN 1ST** contains BARLEYmax barley flakes, soy and amaranth. With a GI of 36, it can help manage diabetes or polycystic ovarian syndrome.



IF YOU WANT TO LOWER YOUR CHOLESTEROL LEVELS ...

▶ **UNCLE TOBYS HEALTHWISE FOR HEART WELLBEING** consists of wholegrain wheat, oat bran, oats and dried fruit, and it helps lower cholesterol reabsorption.



IF YOU WANT TO GO WHEAT-FREE ...

▶ **CARMAN'S NATURAL BIRCHER MUESLI** comprises rolled oats, nuts and dried fruit. It's ideal if you're wheat-sensitive or have irritable bowel syndrome but can tolerate a small amount of dried fruit.



IF YOU WANT TO SKIP SALT ...

▶ **KELLOGG'S WHOLEGRAIN MINI-WHEATS** are made from wheat, oats, barley, rye and triticale. A super-low sodium content (5 mg per 100 g) helps lower your blood pressure and relieve symptoms of PMS.



IF YOU WANT TO UP FIBRE INTAKE ...

▶ **VOGEL'S ULTRA BRAN SOY & LINSEED** is made of wheat bran, wholemeal wheat flour, Hi-maize and linseed meal. Its very high fibre content (12.1 g per 45 g serve) can enhance bowel function and reduce the risk of pressure disorders such as haemorrhoids and varicose veins.



MILK MATTERS

Ever stood by the supermarket fridges scratching your head at the dozens of varieties of milk available? My great-grandmother would be very confused—she used to milk her own cows!

If you're concerned about consuming too much saturated fat, simply choose a skim or low-fat product (or go for a non-dairy 'milk'; these contain less saturated fat). A lower fat content also means fewer kilojoules.

Many women struggle to have the recommended 1,000 to 1,300 mg of calcium per day, so consider a calcium-fortified milk. (Getting a good dose at breakfast is a head start.) And be aware that not all dairy alternatives are good sources of calcium; some are simply refreshing drinks that don't offer the same nutritional profile as dairy does.

If you're vegan, look for a soy or rice milk that also contains vitamin B12 (which isn't naturally found in plant foods unless it's added). B12 deficiency can lead to a type of anaemia and even irreversible nerve and brain damage, but it's easy to prevent.

Various 'functional' milks are also available, with added fibre, plant sterols and omega-3 fatty acids. These can be expensive, but they may help you target specific health conditions. ♣

ORGANIC MILK— IS IT WORTH IT?

Although it's debatable whether organic milk supplies more of nutrients such as omega-3 fatty acids, **buying organic is a great way to help the environment** and reduce your exposure to potentially harmful chemicals. Organic milk is produced by farms that avoid synthetic pesticides, fertilisers and herbicides.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT MILK

- ▶ When choosing **dairy milks**, look for less than 2 g total fat per 100 g (2 per cent). If you prefer a non-dairy product, opt for one that's calcium-fortified: 300 mg calcium per 250 ml.
- ▶ Select **vitamin-B12-enriched** non-dairy brands if you're vegan or following a low-dairy diet.
- ▶ Consider **benefit-specific ingredients**—vitamin D for bones or soy protein and plant sterols to lower cholesterol.

SIX TOP PICKS



- ▶ **SO GOOD ESSENTIAL SOY-MILK** contains isoflavones and is enriched with iron, calcium, folate, B12 and omega-3s. It also helps protect bones and prevent postmenopausal spikes in cholesterol.



- ▶ **PUREHARVEST ORGANIC NATURE'S SOY** is Australian-made from whole soybeans and has a smooth, nutty flavour. Note: it's low in calcium compared with dairy milk.



- ▶ **FREEDOM FOODS LIGHT A2 MILK** contains A2 beta-casein (regular cow's milk is a mix of A1 and A2). It may be a safer option for your kids if you have a family history of type 1 diabetes.



- ▶ **ANLENE NO FAT MILK** has added calcium, vitamin D, zinc and magnesium. A smart milk ideal for women 40+ who need more than just calcium for their bones.



- ▶ **PARMALAT PURE ORGANIC UNHOMOGENISED FULL CREAM MILK** A daily serving or two of full-cream milk—which experts may recommend for short terms—could help fertility, according to a Harvard study.



- ▶ **VITASOY RICE MILK PROTEIN ENRICHED** has higher levels of protein (from chickpeas) and calcium than cow's milk does. Great for everyday use if you have an allergy to dairy or soy.