

NUTRITION STANDARDS FOR ADDED SUGARS: BREAKFAST CEREALS

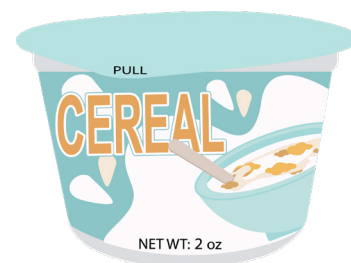
The [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030](#) continue to emphasize reducing added sugars as part of building healthy dietary patterns. Current school meal requirements remain based on the Final Rule aligned with the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020–2025](#).

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) published the Final Rule, “[Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020–2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#),” which established [added sugars limits](#) using a two-phase approach in the school lunch and breakfast programs. The first phase provides added sugars limits for specific products (cereals, yogurt, and flavored milk) to target the leading contributors of added sugars in school meals.

Added Sugars in Breakfast Cereals

The USDA FNS [Added Sugars in School Meals and Competitive Foods Report to Congress](#) found the following:

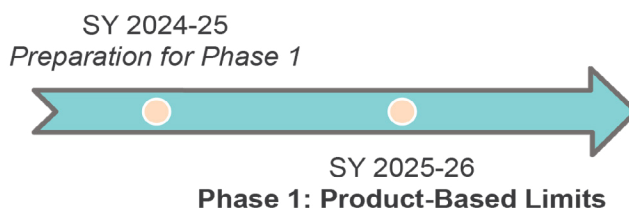
- School breakfasts provide about 17 percent of calories from added sugars.
- Ready-to-eat breakfast cereals, which contain, on average, 21.7 percent of calories from added sugars, are the second major source of added sugars in school breakfast after flavored fat-free milk.



To help reduce the amount of added sugars in school meals, the USDA established an added sugars limit for breakfast cereals.

Added Sugars Timeline and Limit for Breakfast Cereals

As of July 1, 2025, breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams (g) of added sugars per dry ounce.



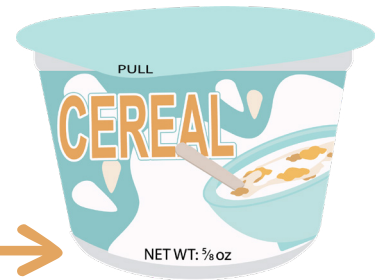
Pre-packaged single-serve cereal bowls are commonly available in 1- or 2-ounce (oz) sizes.

- 1 oz cereal bowl: Added sugars limited to 6 g or less.
- 2 oz cereal bowl: Added sugars limited to 12 g or less.

Determine if Your Breakfast Cereal Meets the Added Sugars Limit

Step 1:

Use the front-of-package label, product specification sheet, or Product Formulation Statement to determine the **Net Weight** of the bowl in ounces (oz) OR use the **Serving size** weight in grams (g) listed in the Nutrition Facts label.



Step 2:

Find the **Added Sugars** line on the **Nutrition Facts** label. Look at the number of grams (g) next to Added Sugars.

Nutrition Facts	
1 servings per container	
Serving size	1 Bowl (17g)
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	100
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0.5g	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 100mg	4%
Total Carbohydrate 14g	5%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Total Sugars 2g	
Includes 2g Added Sugars	4%
Protein 0g	
Not a significant source of vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium	
*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

Step 3:

Use the **Net Weight** identified in Step 1 to find the added sugars limit in the table below. The table contains the net weights of pre-packaged single-serve cereal bowls commonly offered by K-12 foodservice cereal providers.

Serving Size Net Weight (oz)	Serving Size Net Weight (g)	Added Sugars Grams (g)
If the net weight is:	If the net weight is:	Added Sugars must not be more than:
5/8 oz	17 g	3 g
1 oz	28 g	6 g
1 1/16 oz	30 g	6 g
1 1/8 oz	31 g	6 g
1 3/16 oz	33 g	7 g
1 1/4 oz	35 g	7 g
2 oz	56 g	12 g

Step 4:

In the table, find the net weight of the cereal bowl under the Net Weight (oz) or Net Weight (g) column. Then, look at the number to the right of the net weight under the “Added Sugars” column. If the cereal has that amount of added sugars or less, the cereal meets the added sugars limit.

Test Yourself: Does the cereal above meet the added sugars limit? (Find the answer on the last page.)

Note: You can also multiply the **Net Weight (oz)** of a cereal bowl by a **factor of 6** to determine the added sugars limit.

$$\text{Added Sugars Limit (grams)} = \text{Net Weight (oz)} \times 6$$

For example, to determine the added sugars limit of a cereal bowl with a net weight of $1 \frac{1}{8}$ oz, multiply $1 \frac{1}{8}$ by 6:

$$\text{Added Sugars Limit (grams)} = 1 \frac{1}{8} \text{ oz} \times 6$$

$$\text{Added Sugars Limit (grams)} = \frac{9}{8} \text{ oz} \times \frac{6}{1} = \frac{54}{8} = 6.75 \text{ g}$$

6.75 g rounded down to the previous whole number is 6 g.

The added sugars limit for a cereal bowl with a net weight of $1 \frac{1}{8}$ oz is 6 g.

Procuring Breakfast Cereals that Meet the Added Sugars Limit

Use the following checklist to procure breakfast cereals from your vendors that meet the added sugars limit.

Evaluate Your Breakfast Cereals

Determine the amount of added sugars per dry ounce in the breakfast cereals you currently offer. Refer to the methods outlined previously.

Identify which breakfast cereals meet and do not meet the added sugars limit.

Breakfast Cereals that Meet the Added Sugars Limit	Breakfast Cereals that DO NOT Meet the Added Sugars Limit

Assess the popularity of breakfast cereal varieties to ensure that there are various options to choose from that meet the added sugars limit.

Conduct market research to familiarize yourself with other breakfast cereals that meet the added sugars limit.

Discuss Menu Needs with Vendors

Notify vendors of the added sugars limit for breakfast cereals.

Share breakfast cereal options you currently offer that do NOT meet the added sugars limit.

Ask vendors about possible substitutes and future product reformulations.

Incorporate New Products into Menu

Seek student input via taste-testing activities and surveys.

Procure new breakfast cereals that meet the added sugars limit. See the sample product specification below.

Sample Product Specification for Breakfast Cereals

An important aspect of the procurement process is writing specifications. To procure breakfast cereals that meet the added sugars limit, include the limit within the specification. You can insert the added sugars limit within the specification with variations of the following terms:

“No more than,” “May not exceed,” or “A maximum limit of”

6 grams (g) of added sugars per ounce

Here is an example of a partially written product specification for breakfast cereal, suitable for formal or informal procurement documents.



CEREAL, READY-TO-EAT, whole grain-rich, fortified. Puffs, rounds, or flakes. Single-serving pre-packaged bowl. 2.0 oz equivalent grains. **No more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce**. Product Formulation Statement preferred.

Answer

“Test Yourself” activity on page 2: This cereal bowl has 2 grams of added sugars per $\frac{5}{8}$ oz (17 g). The maximum amount of added sugars allowed in $\frac{5}{8}$ oz of cereal is 3 grams. This cereal bowl meets the added sugars limit.

References

- U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2020, December). *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025*. 9th Edition. https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans-2020-2025.pdf
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