

General Mills has the Solution for Whole Grain WIC Breakfast Cereals!

Every existing federally WIC-eligible breakfast cereal from General Mills meet the new USDA breakfast cereal requirements for added sugars, iron, and whole grain!

- ✓ 16 ready-to-eat cereals that meet the federal added sugars, iron, and whole grain WIC requirements
- ✓ 8 cereals that are labeled “Gluten Free” on package
- ✓ National, popular cereal brands including:

Cheerios Original*

Multigrain Cheerios*

Cheerios Oat Crunch Berry

Cheerios Veggie Blends Apple Strawberry*

Cheerios Veggie Blends Blueberry Banana*

Wheat Chex

*This cereal is labeled Gluten-Free on package

Kix Original

Honey Kix

Berry Berry Kix

Corn Chex*

Rice Chex*

Cinnamon Chex*

Blueberry Chex*

Total Whole Grain

Fiber One Honey Clusters

Wheaties Original



USDA Encourages WIC State Agencies to Work to Shift Participant Behavior toward Whole Grain Cereals

USDA Statement in the WIC Food Packages Final Rule:

"The Department remains committed to promoting increased whole grain consumption through nutrition education and highlights that WIC State agencies maintain the option to require that all cereals contain whole grain as the first ingredient. The Department encourages WIC State agencies to utilize redemption data to evaluate participant selections and support shifts in behavior toward the consumption of whole grain breakfast cereals by authorizing an appropriate number and selection of whole grain options."

WIC State Agencies have a Win-Win Solution to Ensure Whole Grain in all Breakfast Cereals

Issue

Two scientific reviews have recommended that all breakfast cereals have a whole grain criteria. Yet, multigrain cereals often do not list "a whole grain as first ingredient" which is now the USDA whole grain definition for breakfast cereals in the final rule. Multigrain cereals often provide meaningful levels of whole grain, yet because each grain-type must be labeled individually on the ingredient list per FDA requirements, these cereals may not have list a "whole grain" first. This concern contributed to the result in the final rule which requires "at least 75%" of cereals on a state's WIC approved food list have "a whole grain as first ingredient", rather than "all" cereals.

There is a solution!

In the final rule, USDA encourages WIC State agencies to assess their programs to determine if allowing only cereals where whole grain is the first ingredient is feasible. As has always been the case, states have flexibility to strengthen requirements for specific foods.

Simply put, WIC State agencies could institute a separate whole grain criteria for the up to 25% of WIC-eligible cereals that do not list a whole grain first on the ingredient list. This could include options such as requiring cereals to meet the "whole grain-rich" standard used in the School Meals and CACFP programs or institute a minimum amount of whole grain per serving (e.g., 10g) that your state will require for those cereals that do not list a whole grain first on the ingredient list. Of course, the other 75% must meet the federal requirement of having a whole grain as first ingredient.

These options strike a meaningful middle ground – it ensures that all WIC cereals contribute to whole grain intake yet creates an avenue for those popular cereals that don't list a whole grain first, to remain approved in your state – as long as they contribute to whole grain intake.

How it could work

- WIC State agencies request the whole grain amount (g/serving) provided by each WIC-eligible cereal during the RFI process and/or ask if 50% or more of the grain component is whole grain (i.e., "whole grain-rich").
- During this review, States should discover that within those 25% of cereals that do not list a whole grain first, at least half provide double-digit levels of whole grain and/or meet the School Meals/CACFP "whole grain-rich" standard.

Why WIC State Agencies Should Explore Allowing Only Cereals that Contribute to Whole Grain Intake

There are key reasons for approving only cereals that provide whole grain:

- Aligns with WIC's mission as a **supplemental** nutrition program
- Aligns with **two scientific reviews** of the WIC Food Packages that recommend that **ALL WIC cereals meet a whole grain criteria**
- Addresses the **systemic lack of whole grain intake** among Americans, including WIC participants:
 - 99% of kids in WIC fall short on whole grain consumption¹
 - 95% of pregnant and lactating women overall fall well below recommended intakes²
 - Aligns with DGA that offering whole grains in the 2nd year of life may establish healthy dietary practices (2020-2025 DGA)
- Acknowledges that **ready-to-eat cereal is the top source of whole grain** for the day and makes the biggest impact on whole grain intakes³, so those participants who choose non-whole grain (those that provide little-to-no whole grain) cereals are missing out on the best opportunity to make a dent in their whole grain intake.
- May benefit CACFP home daycare providers because they often use WIC Approved Food Lists to identify whole grain cereals sold at retail outlets. CACFP providers must serve at least 1 “whole grain-rich” serving per day across the foods that they provide.
- If you have any questions, please email us at WIC@genmills.com

¹ National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control 2013-14 & 2015-16, WIC Population, 1-5 years old.

² Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, 2020. Scientific Report of the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. USDA.

³ NHANES 2013-14 & 2015-16, WIC Population, 1-5 years old.