

Cereal – Quick Tips for CPAs

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WIC Allowed Cereals

WIC allowed cereals include ready-to-eat or instant and regular hot cereals. They must have at least 28 milligrams of iron per 100 grams of dry cereal (45% U.S. RDA for adults per 1 dry ounce of cereal) and not more than 6 grams of sugar per 1 dry ounce of cereal. At least one half of the state's WIC authorized cereals must have whole grain as the primary ingredient by weight.

Helping Participants Choose WIC Allowed Cereals

- **Remind participants to use the WIC app to scan and identify WIC allowed cereals while shopping.** WIC allowed cereals are listed on the MDH WIC website at [UPC Codes – MN WIC APL](#) for WIC staff reference.
- **Use the symbols on cereal pages of the [Shopping Guide](#) to promote the nutritional benefits for the individual participant.**
 - Encourage women to select cereals high in folic acid, as identified by the FA symbol.
 - Point out the GF symbol for individuals avoiding gluten.
 - Work towards the “make half of your grains whole grains” recommendation with cereals high in whole grain identified with a W symbol.
 - Point out the 5+ symbol (for good fiber source) for participants with slow GI issues, a common concern for pregnant women.

Common Concerns and Suggestions

[The Minnesota WIC Benefit Utilization Summary](#) includes the percent of food benefits purchased. The utilization of WIC allowed cereals is generally around 47%. Why is WIC allowed cereal not purchased and used? If a family is not purchasing or using the cereal benefit, take a moment to ask about barriers or issues with purchasing or using cereal. Offer suggestions or tips for using the cereal. Here are some common concerns and suggestions/tips:

- **No appetite in the morning:** Suggest trying cereal later in the morning. Would they enjoy cereal as a snack later in the day? If the family is on the go, finger food cereals (Cheerios, Chex, Kix, etc) in a baggie or small container is an easy to carry snack.
- **No time in the morning for breakfast:** Suggest ways to prep breakfast the night before. Could they put the cereal, bowls, and eating utensils on the table?
- **Not a familiar cultural food:** Suggest the instant and regular hot cereals as an option.

- **Review pictures of cereals in the Shopping Guide.** Ask if they would like to try any of the cereals.
- **Cereal is perceived as a filler or too high in carbohydrates:** Share the nutritional benefits of WIC allowed cereals. Suggest trying cereals high in whole grains.
- **Too much cereal on the household benefits:** Provide ideas for using the cereal. See ideas below.

Creative ways to use cereal

Cereal Add ins:

- Berries – stir in berries for added sweetness and flavor.
- Yogurt – make a parfait with yogurt, crunchy cereal, and fresh fruit. Great idea for breakfast, snacks, or dessert!
- Nut butter – add a spoonful for more protein and feeling of fullness.
- Nuts – try walnuts or toasted almonds for extra protein and healthy fats.
- Dried fruit – add raisins, dried cherries, and dried blueberries for more flavor and variety.

Recipe Ideas

- Make a breading or crust with cereal. Crush flake cereal; add salt and pepper and any other spices of choice. Roll chicken or fish in an egg wash and then the cereal mixture.
- Use dry cereal in a trail mix – many WIC allowed cereals work well in trail mix (Cheerios, Chex, Crispix, Life, Kix, Oatmeal Squares). Remember many trail mixes contain nuts that are a choking risk for children under 3 years of age.
 - Mix dry cereal, dried fruit, nuts, coconut flakes, and chocolate chips for a sweet mix. See this example [Sweet & Salty Cereal Snack Mix](#).
 - For a savory mix, see [Cereal Snack Mix recipe](#).
- Check out muffin and pancake recipes using WIC allowed cereals here [WIC Breads & Grains Recipes](#).

Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

[Shopping Guide](#)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/vendor/fpchng/shopguide.pdf>)

[The Minnesota WIC Benefit Utilization Summary](#)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/reports/benefits.html>)

[Sweet & Salty Cereal Snack Mix](#)

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/recipes/snacks.html#sweet>)

Cereal Snack Mix recipe

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/recipes/snacks.html#cereal>)

WIC Breads & Grains Recipes

(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/recipes/breads.html>)

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