

## **Cereal Bars**

Breakfast, it's the most important meal of the day.

My grandmother used to say, "Breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dine like a pauper".

And so, due to our hectic, time precious lifestyles, more and more cereal bars are arriving on the supermarket shelves to try and make this essential meal easier to achieve. Replacing a nutritional breakfast on a regular basis with a substitute cereal bar is not such a good idea though. Although cereal bars are marketed as healthy and live on the shelves next to breakfast cereal, they can be glorified confectionery. Shockingly one particular "banana bar" contained 43 % of its calories from fat.

Most of the popular cereals are now available as bars. These bars are based on the cereal, fortified with calcium and have added fat to produce a biscuit-type bar. Although most cereal bars make a better choice for breakfast than other sweet biscuits, snack bars or even nothing at all, they are not necessarily an equivalent substitute for a more traditional bowl of cereal. A cereal bar once in a while can do no harm, but not every day.

We compared 11 cereal bars to a serving of their equivalent cereal with milk. The verdict was, all the bars provided less calories and fibre than their equivalent bowl of cereal. This might appeal to "dieters", but is certainly not ideal for growing children. Seven of the bars contained too much saturated fat, and ten of the 11 bars contained hydrogenated oils (trans fatty acids). It is also important to remember that different manufacturers have different serving sizes. Cereal bars vary in size, anything from 22g to 45g goes.

What to look for when you are choosing a cereal bar:

- Compare the content of one bar with another
- Choose the bar which contains the least amount of carbohydrate coming from sugar
- Choose the bar containing the least amount of total fat
- Have a look at the fibre content, some cereal bars have three times the amount of fibre than others

Although there are many more on the market, listed below are some cereal bars that are thought to be a good choice:

- Jordans Fruit and Nut Break Breakfast Bar
- Tesco Chewy & Crisp Cereal Bars
- Jordans Frusli Bar
- New Yorker Breakfast Bar
- Quaker Harvest Chewy Bars
- Asda Chewy Bars

Think about what you grab for your breakfast!!!! It is also important to remember there is no such thing as a good or bad food; all foods (including cereal bars) can play a part in a healthy balanced diet, and that's the key- keep a balance!