Regular consumption of breakfast, including breakfast cereals, has been demonstrated to be a key success factor for the maintenance of a healthier body weight and lower BMI.

Breakfast cereals can play an important role in helping to manage energy intakes and maintain a healthy weight.

Breakfast cereals are a lower calorie breakfast choice and make a limited contribution to daily energy intakes. Researchers have repeatedly shown that people who eat breakfast, in particular breakfast cereals, have a healthier body weight and lower body mass index (BMI) than those who skip breakfast or choose other foods (Keski-Rahkonen et al. 2003; Bertrais et al. 2000; Gibson & O’Sullivan, 1995; Schlundt et al. 1992; Bellisle et al. 1988).

A LOWER CALORIE BREAKFAST CHOICE

Breakfast cereals are lower in sugar and fat than many other popular breakfast choices. Compared to other breakfast foods, they provide a limited number of calories. For example, a bowl of Nesquik Cereal with semi-skimmed milk provides 174 Kcal, whereas a wholemeal toast with butter and jam provides approximately double, 359 Kcal.

A LIMITED CONTRIBUTION TO DAILY ENERGY INTAKES

Breakfast cereals make a small contribution to total energy intakes and help maintain a healthy weight regardless of age. Studies have shown that breakfast cereals account between 3-5% of total daily energy intakes.

Among children & teenagers:

- In the UK, breakfast cereals contribute 4% of total energy intake in children (4-10 year old) and in teenagers (11-18 year old) while delivering much higher proportions of a number of important nutrients, e.g. vitamins and minerals (NDNS 2008/2009).
- In France, breakfast cereals account for 5.1% of total energy intake in children who consume breakfast cereals (INCA 2.0, 2008).
- In the US, breakfast cereals account for about 4% of total energy intake in children aged 4 to 12. (CDC, 2005-6). Teenagers

Among adults:

- In the UK, breakfast cereals contribute 3% of total energy intake in adults (NDNS 2008/9). In France among adults, who consume breakfast cereals they contribute 5.2% of total energy intakes (INCA 2.0, 2008).

REFERENCES

Eating breakfast is a key success factor for a healthy body weight

Studies have demonstrated that eating breakfast plays a key role in helping people manage their energy intakes and their weight. Regular breakfast eaters have healthier body weight, lower BMIs and are more likely to keep weight off in the long term.

**EATING BREAKFAST HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED TO HELP MANAGE ENERGY INTAKES THROUGHOUT THE DAY**

People who eat breakfast tend to better manage their energy intake throughout the day. A dietary study in France following the meal patterns of people who consume breakfast and those that do not, has shown that people (aged 15 years and older) eating breakfast tend to snack less between meals (see Fig 3) and also eat less energy at each meal. (INCA2, 2008)

**SKIPPING BREAKFAST IS THE MOST IMPORTANT RISK FACTOR FOR OVERWEIGHT & OBESITY**

Many studies from around the world have shown that there is an association between skipping breakfast and a higher body weight:

- A recent systematic review of observational studies of children and adolescents in Europe demonstrated that eating breakfast is associated with a reduced risk of becoming overweight or obese and a reduction in BMI (Sajzewa & Ruszczylska, 2010).
- A study including 200,000 overweight school children (11-15 year olds) from over 41 European countries (including Northern, Southern & Eastern Europe) identified skipping breakfast as a major risk factor linked with overweight. The study was designed to investigate the relationship between overweight with demographic and lifestyle factors and it found a consistent inverse association between regular breakfast consumption and overweight (Haug et al. 2009).
- A study on 35,000 Swedish secondary school students (aged 13-16 yrs.) indicated that skipping breakfast is related to overweight even more than physical inactivity, in particular among the younger subjects (Kozenz et al. 2009).
- A French study showed that obese and overweight children eat less at breakfast and more at dinner than their lean counterparts (Bellisle et al. 1998).
- A study in New Zealand also found that skipping breakfast was associated with a higher BMI (Utter et al. 2007).
- In a Finnish study of 16 year olds and their parents, breakfast skipping among adolescents and adults, was associated with having a higher BMI (Keski-Rahkonen et al. 2003).
- In a prospective study of British men and women older than 40 years, subjects consuming a high percentage of calories with breakfast had a lower mean BMI and a reduced weight gain during the following 5 years, as compared to men consuming a lower percentage of calories in the same meal (Purslow et al. 2008).
- Data from the US has shown that children and adults who eat breakfast have healthier weights than children who skip breakfast (Wolfe et al. 1994; Haines et al. 1996).

**FREQUENT BREAKFAST CEREAL EATERS TEND TO MAINTAIN A HEALTHIER BODY WEIGHT REGARDLESS OF AGE**

Multiple studies have demonstrated that breakfast cereal consumption is related to a healthy weight:

- A systematic review of nine studies, concluded that there is consistent evidence of an association between breakfast cereal consumption and a healthy weight (de la Hunty & Ashwell, 2007).
- A large study published in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association followed 2,000 American girls over a 10-year period. It found that girls who followed a consistent cereal-eating pattern had healthier body weight and lower BMIs than those who did not. Frequency of breakfast consumption and cereal consumption declined with age, but girls who continued to eat cereal frequently maintained a healthier body weight through adolescence (Barton et al. 2005).
- Another study found that breakfast consumption was associated with a lower body weight, especially when ready-to-eat cereals are consumed (Song et al. 2005), while yet another study found that people who reported consuming a breakfast of ready-to-eat cereal had healthier body weights than those who consumed higher fat breakfasts (Cho et al. 2003).
- In a Finnish study of 16 year olds and their parents, breakfast skipping among adolescents and adults, was associated with having a higher BMI (Keski-Rahkonen et al. 2003).

**FREQUENT CEREAL CONSUMPTION FURTHER LOWERS RISK OF OVERWEIGHT**

Frequent cereal eaters tend to have healthier body weights overall – including children. Children who eat 4-7 servings of breakfast cereal over a 14-day period are less likely to be overweight than children who eat fewer than 4 servings. Children who eat breakfast cereals more frequently (more than 7 times in a 14-day period) are even less likely to be overweight than children who eat cereal less frequently. This is true for all age groups (Albertson et al. 2003). Studies have demonstrated that there is a consistent relationship between breakfast cereal consumption, healthier body weight and lower BMIs. Interestingly, the more frequent the breakfast cereal consumption, the lower the likelihood of overweight in both children and adults.