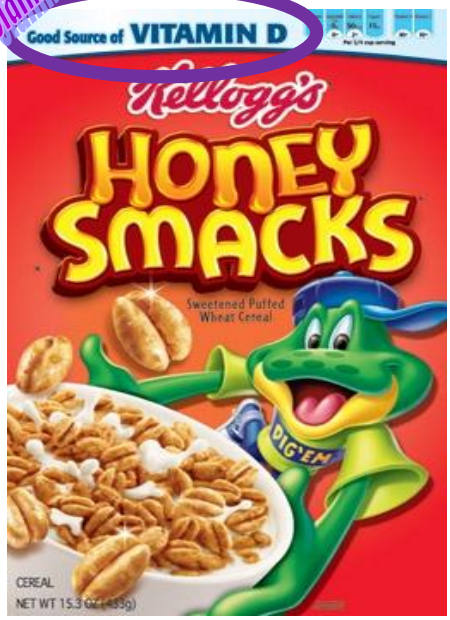
Cereal Box Claims

Many cereal boxes feature claims such as the ones displayed below. While these claims are legal and highlight cherry-picked nutrients, they can also be misleading; you should always look closely at the nutrition facts and ingredients before choosing a cereal for your family. In general, your best approach should be to ignore the front of the box and just focus on the nutrition fact panel. Learn more about reading a cereal nutrition fact panel. The examples below are not all currently on the shelves (as packaging changes frequently), but as the old saying goes, 'fool me once shame on you, fool me twice, shame on me!'. Don't be fooled; know the facts.

Visit cerealfacts.org for more facts & tips for picking healthier cereals that kids *will* eat!

The claim:



Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 3/4 Cup (27g

Amount Per Serving	Cereal	with 1/2 c skim mil
Calories	100	140
Calories from Fat	5	5
	% Daily Value	
Total Fat 0.5g*	1%	1
Saturated Fat 0g	0%	0
Trans Fat 0g		
Polyunsaturated Fat 0g		
Monounsaturated Fat 0g		
Cholesterol 0mg	0%	0
Sodium 40mg	2%	4
Potassium 50mg	1%	7
Total Carbohydrate 24g	8%	10
Dietary Fiber 1g	5%	5
Sugars 15g		
Protein 2g		
Vitamin A	10%	15
Vitamin C	10%	10
Calcium	0%	15
Iron	2%	2
Vitamin D	10%	25

Ingredients: Sugar, wheat, dextrose, honey, contains 2% or less of vegetable oil (hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated soybean), salt, caramel color, soy lecithin, BHT for freshness.
Vitamins and Minerals: Vitamin C (sodium ascorbate), niacinamide, vitamin B_6 (pyridoxine

The facts:

The amount of vitamin D is the minimum amount that most fortified cereals provide. This amount of vitamin D does not balance out the 15g of sugar per serving –over 50% by weight! In fact, a form of sugar is the first, third and forth ingredient listed on the nutrition panel.

This cereal has a Nutrition Profiling Index* score of 46.

The claim:

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 cup (30g)
Servings Per Container about 13

Amount Per Serving	Cereal	Cereal with 1/2 cup Fat Free Milk
Calories	120	160
Calories from Fat	20	20
		% Daily Value**
Total Fat 2.5g*	4%	4%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%	0%
Trans Fat 0g		
Polyunsaturated Fat 1g		
Monounsaturated Fat 1g		
Cholesterol 0mg	0%	0%
Sodium 115mg	5%	8%
Potassium 40mg	1%	7%
Total Carbohydrate 25g	8%	10%
Dietary Fiber <1g	4%	4%
Sugars 12g		
Other Carbohydrate 12g		
Protein 2g		
Vitamin A	15%	20%
Vitamin C	0%	0%
Calcium	0%	15%
Iron	10%	10%
Vitamin D	10%	25%
Thiamin	25%	30%

INGREDIENTS: SUGAR, WHEAT FLOUR, CORN FLOUR, WHOLE GRAIN OAT FLOUR, PARTIALLY HYDROGENATED SOYBEAN OIL, SALT, CARAMEL COLOR, SOY LECITHIN, NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR, TURMERIC (COLOR), BHT ADDED TO PACKAGING MATERIAL TO PRESERVE PRODUCT FRESHNESS.
VITAMINS AND MINERALS: NIACINAMIDE (B VITAMIN), REDUCED

The facts:

True, there is no high fructose corn syrup, but it is still 40% sugar, and one serving packs 12g of sugar! In fact, sugar is the first ingredient listed on the nutrition panel.

This cereal has a Nutrition Profiling Index* score of 44.

***The Nutrition Profiling Index** score is a reflection of the overall nutrition of a cereal based on its total calories and the mix of healthy and unhealthy ingredients. **A score above 62 is healthy.**

The claim:

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size ¾ cup (27g)
Servings Per Container about 16

Amount Per Serving	Lucky Charms	with ½ cup skim milk
Calories	110	150
Calories from Fat	10	10
		% Daily Value**
Total Fat 1g*	2%	2%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%	0%
Trans Fat 0g		
Polyunsaturated Fat 0g		
Monounsaturated Fat 0g		
Cholesterol 0mg	0%	1%
Sodium 170mg	7%	10%
Potassium 50mg	1%	7%
Total Carbohydrate 22g	7%	9%
Dietary Fiber 2g	6%	6%
Sugars 10g		

Ingredients: Whole Grain Oats, Marshmallows (sugar, modified corn starch, corn syrup, dextrose, gelatin, calcium carbonate, yellows 5&6, blue 1, red 40, artificial flavor), Sugar, Oat Flour, Corn Syrup, Corn Starch, Salt, Trisodium Phosphate, Color Added, Natural and Artificial Flavor. Vitamin E (mixed tocopherols) Added to Preserve Freshness.

The facts:

The claim of 'more whole grain than any other ingredient' is true, but check out all the sources of sugar (which are listed separately): marshmallows, sugar, corn syrup, and dextrose. A total of 10 grams!

This cereal has a Nutrition Profiling Index* score of 36.

The claim:

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size ¾ Cup (31g)

Amount Per Serving	Cereal	with ½ cup skim milk
Calories	120	160
Calories from Fat	5	5
		% Daily Value**
Total Fat 1g*	2%	2%
Saturated Fat 0.5g	3%	3%
Trans Fat 0g		
Polyunsaturated Fat 0g		
Monounsaturated Fat 0g		
Cholesterol 0mg	0%	0%
Sodium 130mg	5%	8%
Potassium 60mg	2%	7%
Total Carbohydrate 27g	9%	11%
Dietary Fiber less than 1g	2%	2%
Sugars 12g		
Protein 1g		
Vitamin A	25%	30%
Vitamin C	25%	25%
Calcium	4%	20%
Iron	25%	25%
Vitamin D	15%	25%
Vitamin E	25%	25%
Thiamin	25%	30%
Riboflavin	25%	35%
Niacin	25%	25%
Vitamin B_6	25%	25%

Ingredients: Rice, sugar, cocoa processed with alkali, contains 2% or less of semisweet chocolate (sugar, chocolate, dextrose), partially hydrogenated vegetable oil (coconut, soybean and/or cottonseed), salt, malt flavoring, artificial flavor, BHT for freshness.
Vitamins and Minerals: Calcium

The facts:

Although this claim has been removed from Cocoa Krispies, they tried to fool us. At 25% of the recommended daily value of these vitamins, it is a weak substitute for healthy eating. More to the point, it has 12 grams of sugar as well as bad fats (partially hydrogenated oils).

This cereal has a Nutrition Profiling Index* score of 40.

The claim:

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 1 Cup (28g)

Amount Per Serving	Cereal	with ½ cup skim milk
Calories	100	140
Calories from Fat	5	5
		% Daily Value**
Total Fat 0.5g*	1%	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%	0%
Trans Fat 0g		
Polyunsaturated Fat 0g		
Monounsaturated Fat 0g		
Cholesterol 0mg	0%	0%
Sodium 130mg	5%	8%
Potassium 35mg	1%	7%
Total Carbohydrate 25g	8%	10%
Dietary Fiber 3g	10%	10%
Sugars 12g		
Protein 1g		
Vitamin A	10%	15%

Ingredients: Sugar, whole grain corn flour, wheat flour, whole grain oat flour, oat fiber, soluble corn fiber, contains 2% or less of salt, milled corn, dried apples, apple juice concentrate, cornstarch, cinnamon, modified corn starch, yellow 6, baking soda, turmeric color, blue 1, natural and artificial flavor, red 40, BHT for freshness.

The facts:

Sure it has fiber – 3 grams -- but it packs a punch in terms of sugar—the same as 3 teaspoons in one serving; in fact, sugar is the first ingredient (43% of the cereal).

This cereal has a Nutrition Profiling Index* score of 40.