The Irish Breakfast Cereals Association is affiliated to FDII/IBEC and represents the interests of a number of Breakfast Cereal companies in the Republic. Its members include Flahavans, Kellogg's, Nestle Cereals, and Weetabix.

Breakfast cereals offer the most nutrient dense and lowest fat choice at breakfast time. Eating breakfast has been shown to be beneficial for both body and mind in several ways:

- People who eat breakfast consume more essential nutrients, which are necessary for a healthy body and lifestyle, than those who don’t
- People who eat breakfast tend to be slimmer than those who skip breakfast
- Eating breakfast contributes to cognitive performance and improves concentration.

A typical serving size for breakfast cereal products in Ireland is in the region of 40g.

Position on Fortification

The Irish Breakfast Cereals Association (IBCA) notes the key role played by fortified breakfast cereals as an important source of vitamins and minerals in the Irish diet.

Fortification of breakfast cereals is based on the recommendation by nutritionists that breakfast cereals should provide 20-25% of daily nutritional requirements. It is important in child nutrition and development, as those eating breakfast cereals are more likely to meet their daily requirements of essential vitamins and minerals.

In summary, key benefits of fortified cereals are as follows:

- Fortified breakfast cereals are an important source of iron in the Irish diet, providing 18% of mean total iron intake

The Irish Breakfast Cereals Association
• Fortified breakfast cereals are an excellent source of folic acid, on average contributing 18% of the daily intake
• Fortified breakfast cereals are an important source of vitamin B12 for vegans and vegetarians
• Fortified breakfast cereals contribute significant amounts of riboflavin and niacin on average providing 17% and 15% of daily intake respectively.
• Fortified breakfast cereals contribute significant amounts of fibre on average providing 7% of daily intake
• 4% of the average daily energy requirements is obtained from fortified breakfast cereals
• Fortified breakfast cereals contribute 7% of the average daily vitamin D intake.
• Fortified breakfast cereals provide 11% of dietary folic intake in women.

[Safefood Summary Report, North/South Ireland food Consumption Survey (IUNA) 2005]

The contribution of breakfast cereals to vitamin D intake is particularly important during the winter months when vitamin D is not obtained from the sun. Also important is the presence of iron. Iron carries oxygen around the body to cells and muscles. Too little iron can result in anemia which causes tiredness and poor concentration.

In the North/South Ireland Food consumption 2005 survey the Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance (IUNA) point to Breakfast Cereals as being an important source of vitamins.¹

The statistics can be compared with those of adults which can be illustrated by the diagram below:
The difference in vitamin and mineral intake between those who consume breakfast cereals and those who don’t can be illustrated by the diagram below.

(Source: CEEREAL Brochure)

In Ireland the Irish Breakfast Cereals Association members were amongst the first to fortify with folate and are currently in the top four food categories.

The Irish Breakfast Cereals Association
contributing to dietary folate intake in women. Increased consumption of folate helps to reduce the chances of a neural tube defect in a newborn baby. In Ireland the incidence of Neural Tube Defects is high but up to 70% of such defects can be prevented through increasing intakes of folic acid in women of childbearing age.  

Breakfast Cereals contain the following vitamins and minerals:

- **Niacin** is a B vitamin which is important for the digestive system, skin and nerves. It helps convert food to energy. The body cannot store niacin so we need a continuous daily supply.

- **Thiamin** helps transform carbohydrates to energy in the body. It is essential for the heart, muscles and nervous system. Too little thiamin can cause weakness, tiredness and nerve damage.

- **Vitamin B6** is needed for the body to break down proteins, and helps the growth of white blood cells - so very important for the immune and nervous systems. It also helps produce haemoglobin to carry oxygen around the body and too little can result in anemia.

- **Riboflavin** is another essential B vitamin that must be replenished every day. It aids growth and production of red blood cells, as well as helping to release energy from carbohydrates. Too little riboflavin seriously affects metabolism and can result in a sore throat, bloodshot eyes and bad skin and nails.

For further information contact:

Thomas Burke  
Secretary  
Irish Breakfast Cereals Association  
Tel: +353 1 6051688  
Thomas.burke@ibec.ie

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