

A Spoonful of Sugar - The “Not So Sweet” Truth About Barbados’ Breakfast Cereals

The Caribbean is facing a public health crisis in the rising level of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). There is a proven link between obesity and NCDs such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes, and dietary advice across the board is to reduce “free” sugar consumption (this excludes naturally occurring sugars in fresh fruit and vegetables, and milk). There is a need to be particularly mindful of hidden sugars within everyday processed foods.

A survey conducted by World Action on Salt and Health (WASH) found that big-box cereal brands – Kellogg’s and Nestlé/General Mills are still adding excessive amounts of sugar and salt to their products.¹ Unearthed also, was the huge disparity in the nutrition content of the same branded cereal product, depending on its country of manufacture. For example, Nestlé Cheerios Honey in Hong Kong (34.2g per 100g) contains almost double as much sugar as the same cereal in Australia (17.8g per 100g).

To include Barbados in the WASH survey, Healthy Caribbean Coalition looked at the sugar and salt content of imported branded cereal products presently consumed in Barbados. In Barbados, the most sugar-loaded product is Kellogg’s Honey Smacks, at 55.6g of sugar per 100g of cereal. For children under 4 years of age, the recommended “free” sugar allowance of less than 5 percent of daily calorie intake is instantly blown with only one bowl of Kellogg’s Honey Smacks cereal for breakfast.² While 58% of the surveyed cereal classed as “high sugar” cereals (over 22.5g per 100g), Kellogg’s Special K was the only “high salt” cereal at 1.69g of salt per 100g of cereal.³ Therefore, efforts need to be particularly focused on achieving healthier sugar levels in cereal products sold in Barbados.

Kellogg’s and Nestle/General Mills cereals in Barbados placed in the top 3 highest-sugar content in over half of the cereals surveyed (66%). Across all countries, Kellogg’s Frosties in Barbados had the highest sugar content (42g per 100g), with 36% more sugar than in the same cereal sold in Hong Kong and Pakistan (30g per 100g). As Barbados imports branded cereal products, it is no surprise that the nutritional content of cereals in Barbados mimics those manufactured in Mexico and the United States.

Looking at the sugar and salt content within imported cereal brands presently consumed in Barbados, it is apparent that Barbados needs to add its voice to the international call urging the large cereal manufacturers to reduce the levels of sugar and salt in the cereals they produce. Manufacturers are able to make compromises in the interest of their customer's wellbeing, but the reduction in the amount of sugar and salt in the cereals produced needs to be universally consistent, regardless of the point of sale.

References

1. Global Breakfast Cereal Survey. London: World Action on Salt and Health; 2016.
2. Guideline: Sugars intake for adults and children. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2015.
3. Guide to creating a front of pack (FoP) nutrition label for pre-packed products sold through retail outlets. Department of Health; 2016.

Table 1. Full data from WASH Global Breakfast Cereal Survey (Inclusion of Barbados' breakfast cereal sugar and salt data)

COUNTRY	SERVING SIZE (g)	TOTAL SUGARS (g) PER SERVING	SALT (g) PER SERVING	TOTAL SUGARS (g) PER 100g	SALT (g) PER 100g
NESTLÉ CHEERIOS HONEY					
Hong Kong	30	10.3	0.23	34.2	0.78
Barbados	30	10	0.43	33.2	1.42
Mexico	30	8.6	0.32	28.7	1.06
Hungary	30	7.7	0.32	25.6	1.08
Greece	30	7.3	0.32	24.4	1.06
Italy	30	7.3	0.32	24.4	1.06
Kuwait	30	7.3	0.32	24.4	1.06
Oman	30	7.3	0.32	24.4	1.06
Spain	30	7.3	0.32	24.4	1.06
UAE	30	7.3	0.32	24.4	1.06
Finland	30	7.2	0.27	24.0	0.90
Ireland	30	7.2	0.30	24.0	0.94
Denmark	30	7.2	0.28	24.0	0.94
Sweden	30	7.2	0.28	24.0	0.94
India	30	7.2	0.28	24.0	0.94
UK	30	7.2	0.28	24.0	0.94
Australia	30	5.3	0.20	17.8	0.67
NESTLÉ FITNESS					
Argentina	30	4.5	0.31	15.0	1.03
Belgium	30	3.5	0.34	12.0	1.10
Spain	30	3.6	0.34	12.0	1.14
Croatia	30	3.5	0.33	11.8	1.10
UAE	30	3.5	0.34	11.8	1.14
Greece	30	3.5	0.34	11.8	1.14
Italy	30	3.5	0.34	11.8	1.14
Kuwait	30	3.5	0.34	11.8	1.14
Morocco	30	3.5	0.34	11.8	1.14
Barbados	30	3.5	0.34	11.8	1.13
Mexico	30	3.5	0.34	11.7	1.13
Denmark	30	2.8	0.27	9.5	0.91
Sweden	30	2.8	0.27	9.5	0.91
Norway	30	2.8	0.27	9.5	0.91
NESTLÉ FITNESS FRUITS					
Hong Kong	40	12.1	0.37	30.3	0.92

Pakistan	40	12.1	0.37	30.3	0.92
Greece	40	10.5	0.35	26.1	0.86
Hungary	40	10.5	0.35	26.1	0.86
Italy	40	10.5	0.35	26.1	0.86
Kuwait	40	10.5	0.35	26.1	0.86
Oman	40	10.5	0.35	26.1	0.86
Spain	40	10.4	0.34	26.1	0.86
Finland	30	7.8	0.27	26.1	0.90
Belgium	40	10.4	0.34	26.1	0.86
Mexico	40	10.0	0.37	25.0	0.93
Barbados	40	10.0	0.37	24.9	0.93
KELLOGG'S FROOT LOOPS					
Mexico	30	12.0	0.40	40.0	1.33
Brazil	30	12.0	0.31	40.0	1.03
Australia	30	11.4	0.26	38.0	0.85
New Zealand	30	11.4	0.26	38.0	0.85
Canada	27	10.0	0.26	37.0	0.97
Pakistan	30	11.0	0.34	36.7	0.92
Barbados	29	10.0	0.38	34.5	1.29
United States	29	10.0	0.38	34.5	1.29
Hong Kong	29	10.0	0.38	34.5	1.29
UAE	30	7.5	0.34	25.0	1.13
Kuwait	30	7.5	0.34	25.0	1.13
KELLOGG'S FROSTIES					
Barbados	31	13	0.35	42.0	1.13
Australia	30	12.4	0.24	41.3	0.80
New Zealand	30	12.4	0.24	41.3	0.80
Argentina	30	12.0	0.19	40.0	0.63
Mexico	30	12.0	0.29	40.0	0.96
Brazil	30	12.0	0.32	40.0	1.08
UK	30	11.1	0.25	37.0	0.83
Spain	30	11.1	0.25	37.0	0.83
Belgium	30	11.0	0.25	37.0	0.83
Denmark	30	11.0	0.25	37.0	0.83
Greece	30	11.0	0.25	37.0	0.83
Italy	30	11.0	0.25	37.0	0.83
Kuwait	30	11.0	0.25	37.0	0.83
Morocco	30	11.0	0.25	37.0	0.83
Netherlands	30	11.0	0.25	37.0	0.83
Qatar	30	11.0	0.25	37.0	0.83

Sweden	30	11.0	0.25	37.0	0.83
UAE	30	11.0	0.25	37.0	0.83
Ireland	30	11.1	0.26	37.0	0.88
Hungary	30	11.0	0.25	37.0	0.83
India	30	11.0	0.25	36.7	0.83
Canada	28	10.0	0.33	35.7	1.16
United States	29	10.0	0.38	34.5	1.29
Hong Kong	30	9.0	0.38	30.0	1.26
Pakistan	30	9.0	0.38	30.0	1.26
KELLOGG'S FROZEN					
Mexico	32	10.0	0.38	31.3	1.17
United States	32	10.0	0.38	31.3	1.17
Barbados	32	10.0	0.38	31.3	1.17
Australia	30	6.7	0.11	22.2	0.36
New Zealand	30	6.7	0.11	22.2	0.36
Hong Kong	30	6.4	0.38	21.2	1.26
Croatia	30	6.3	0.11	21.0	0.38
Qatar	30	6.3	0.11	21.0	0.38
UK	30	6.3	0.11	21.0	0.38
Spain	30	6.3	0.11	21.0	0.38
Belgium	30	6.3	0.11	21.0	0.38
Greece	30	6.3	0.11	21.0	0.38
Kuwait	30	6.3	0.11	21.0	0.38
Norway	30	6.3	0.11	21.0	0.38
Finland	30	6.3	0.12	21.0	0.40
KELLOGG'S SPECIAL K					
Pakistan	30	7.5	0.50	25.0	1.67
Sri Lanka	30	7.5	0.50	25.0	1.67
India	30	7.5	0.50	25.0	1.67
Ireland	30	5.1	0.30	17.0	1.00
Mexico	30	5.0	0.38	16.7	1.25
Belgium	30	4.5	0.30	15.0	1.00
Greece	30	4.5	0.30	15.0	1.00
Hungary	30	4.5	0.30	15.0	1.00
Italy	30	4.5	0.30	15.0	1.00
Morocco	30	4.5	0.30	15.0	1.00
Netherlands	30	4.5	0.30	15.0	1.00
Oman	30	4.5	0.30	15.0	1.00
Spain	30	4.5	0.30	15.0	1.00
UK	30	4.5	0.30	15.0	1.00

UAE	30	4.5	0.30	15.0	1.00
Australia	40	5.8	0.36	14.5	0.90
New Zealand	40	5.8	0.36	14.5	0.90
United States	31	4.0	0.53	12.9	1.69
Barbados	31	4.0	0.53	12.9	1.69
Canada	32	4.0	0.58	12.5	1.80
Denmark	30	3.6	0.30	11.9	1.00
Finland	30	3.6	0.30	11.9	1.00
Norway	30	3.6	0.30	11.9	1.00
Sweden	30	3.6	0.30	11.9	1.00
KELLOGG'S SMACKS					
Mexico	30	17.0	0.11	56.7	0.38
United States	27	15.0	0.10	55.6	0.37
Barbados	27	15	0.10	55.6	0.37
Belgium	30	13.0	0.02	43.0	0.08
Kuwait	30	13.0	0.02	43.0	0.08
Morocco	30	13.0	0.02	43.0	0.08
Norway	30	13.0	0.02	43.0	0.08
Qatar	30	13.0	0.02	43.0	0.08
UAE	30	13.0	0.02	43.0	0.08
Spain	30	12.9	0.02	43.0	0.08
KELLOGG'S RICE KRISPIES					
United States	33	4.0	0.48	12.1	1.44
Barbados	33	4.0	0.48	12.1	1.44
Mexico	25	3.0	0.35	12.0	1.40
Canada	28	3.0	0.48	10.7	1.70
Australia	35	3.7	0.46	10.6	1.32
Finland	30	3.0	0.33	10.0	1.10
Denmark	30	3.0	0.34	10.0	1.13
India	30	3.0	0.34	10.0	1.13
Pakistan	30	3.0	0.34	10.0	1.13
Ireland	30	3.0	0.34	10.0	1.13
UK	30	3.0	0.34	10.0	1.13
Sri Lanka	30	2.7	0.58	9.0	1.92
Belgium	30	2.4	0.34	8.0	1.13
Italy	30	2.4	0.34	8.0	1.13
Kuwait	30	2.4	0.34	8.0	1.13
Qatar	30	2.4	0.34	8.0	1.13
Spain	30	2.4	0.34	8.0	1.13
NESTLÉ COOKIE CRISP					

Qatar	26	9.0	0.30	34.6	1.15
United States	26	9.0	0.30	34.6	1.15
Barbados	30	9.0	0.30	30.0	0.98
Mexico	30	9.0	0.30	30.0	0.98
UK	30	7.5	0.23	25.0	0.78
Ireland	30	7.5	0.23	25.0	0.78
India	30	7.5	0.23	25.0	0.78
Belgium	30	7.5	0.23	25.0	0.78
Greece	30	7.5	0.23	24.9	0.78
Kuwait	30	7.5	0.23	24.9	0.78
UAE	30	7.5	0.23	24.9	0.78
Croatia	30	7.5	0.23	24.8	0.77
Finland	30	7.3	0.25	24.2	0.84
Italy	30	7.2	0.25	24.2	0.84
NESTLÉ NESQUICK					
Canada	29	9.0	0.43	31.0	1.47
Argentina	30	9.0	0.15	30.0	0.50
Barbados	30	8.9	0.24	29.8	0.80
Mexico	30	8.9	0.24	29.7	0.80
Kuwait	30	8.4	0.19	28.1	0.63
Qatar	30	8.4	0.19	28.1	0.63
UAE	30	8.4	0.15	27.9	0.51
Croatia	30	7.6	0.15	25.2	0.50
Greece	30	7.6	0.15	25.2	0.50
Italy	30	7.6	0.15	25.2	0.50
Morocco	30	7.6	0.15	25.2	0.50
Spain	30	7.6	0.15	25.2	0.50
Denmark	30	7.6	0.17	25.2	0.58
Finland	30	7.5	0.15	25.1	0.50
Belgium	30	7.6	0.15	25.0	0.50
UK	30	7.5	0.15	25.0	0.50
Ireland	30	7.5	0.15	25.0	50.0
Norway	30	7.5	0.15	25.0	50.1

Notes: Table 1

For Barbados, data was collected in-store: Massy Stores Supermarkets, Emerald City Supermarket and Popular Discounts Supermarket

For countries represented in the WASH study, data was collected using national databases, online and in-store

Data sorted by product with the highest sugar (g) per 100g of cereal

Colour coding according to UK Front of Pack Guidance. For salt: Green $\leq 0.3/100g$, Amber $>0.3 -$

$\leq 1.5g$, Red $>1.5g /100g$. For sugars: Green $\leq 5.0g/100g$, Amber $>5.0 - \leq 22.5/100g$, Red $>22.5g/100g$

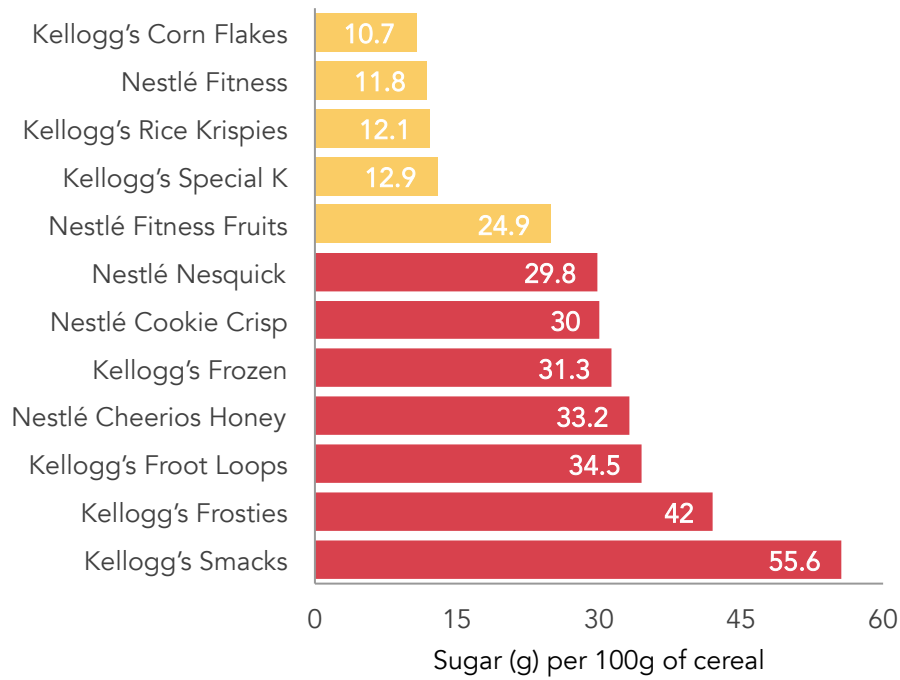


Chart 1. Sugar Levels of Imported Branded Breakfast Cereals Sold in Barbados

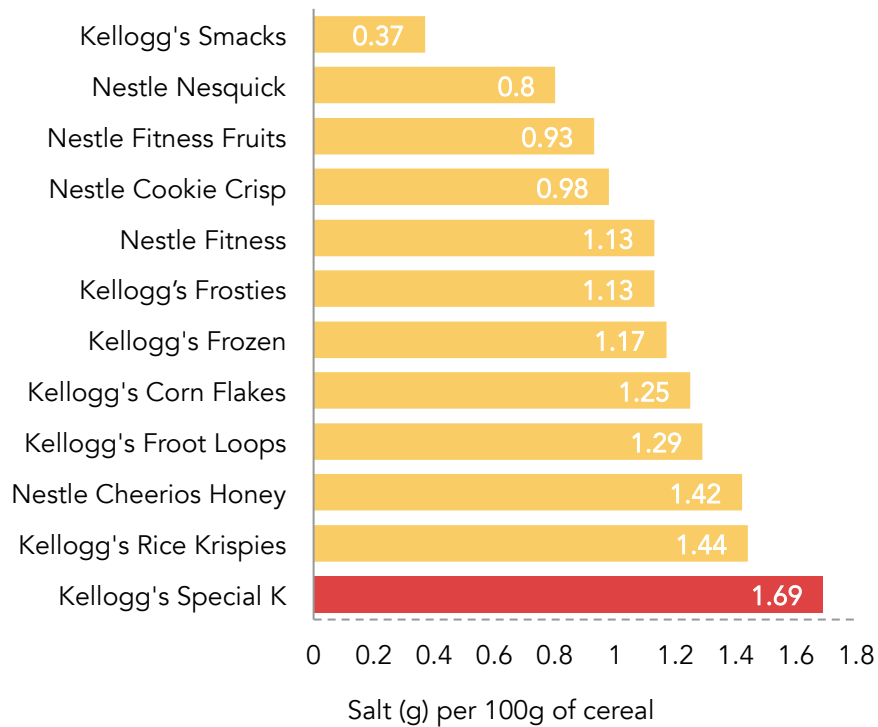


Chart 2. Salt Levels of Imported Branded Breakfast Cereals Sold in Barbados

Notes: Chart 1 and 2

Colour coding according to UK Front of Pack Guidance. For salt: Green $\leq 0.3/100g$, Amber $>0.3 - \leq 1.5g$, Red $>1.5g /100g$. For sugars: Green $\leq 5.0g/100g$, Amber $>5.0 - \leq 22.5g/100g$, Red $>22.5g/100g$

Table 2. Sugar levels of imported branded breakfast cereals consumed in Barbados, in comparison to the country(s) with the lowest sugar Levels for the identical brands

BRAND	TOTAL SUGAR (g) PER 100g		DIFFERENCE
	BARBADOS	COUNTRY WITH LOWEST	
Nestlé Cheerios Honey	33.2	17.8 (Australia)	15.4
Kellogg's Frosties	42.0	27.0 (Oman)	15
Kellogg's Honey Smacks	55.6	43.0 (Belgium, Kuwait, Morocco, Norway, Qatar, UAE, Spain)	12.6
Kellogg's Frozen	31.3	21.0 (Croatia, Qatar, UK, Spain, Belgium, Greece, Kuwait, Norway, Finland)	10.3
Kellogg's Special K	12.9	11.9 (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden)	10
Kellogg's Froot Loops	34.5	25.0 (UAE, Kuwait)	9.5
Nestlé Cookie Crisp	30.0	24.2 (Finland, Italy)	5.8
Nestlé Nesquick	29.8	25.0 (Belgium, UK, Ireland, Norway)	4.8
Kellogg's Rice Krispies	12.1	8.0 (Belgium, Italy, Kuwait, Qatar, Spain)	4.1
Kellogg's Corn Flakes	10.7	8.0 (Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Kuwait, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Oman, Qatar, Spain, Sweden, Italy, UK, UAE, Finland, Argentina, Brazil)	2.7
Nestlé Fitness	11.8	9.5 (Denmark, Sweden, Norway)	2.3
Nestlé Fitness Fruits	24.9	24.9 (Barbados)	0