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FOOD OBSERVER

IN THE AISLES

Rating Whole Grain Cereals

Sweet & crunchy rule the day

READING THROUGH cereal names and claims can be as complicated as deciphering tax code (see Nutrition Source, page 22). We used five simple tips (see box, right) to cut through the confusing messages in the cereal aisle and put six smart choices in front of our panel of

is a crunchy corn-and-oat-based pillow, sweetened with unsulfured molasses. Our two kid panelists gave Puffins a solid thumbs up, both rating the cereal as their favorite by a long shot. And the grownups on the panel gave Puffins equally resounding approval. **TESHA:** "This one definitely has the best taste." **MAUREEN PRICE:** "This was my favorite overall; seems very light. I think it would go well with fruit—I'd buy it." **O'BRIEN,** who was a little more hesitant about Puffins but gave it high scores remarked that Puffins seemed "like Sugar Pops for the natural crowd." He also found the cereal a little too sweet and quick to go soggy in milk.

Quaker Essentials Oatmeal Squares (5 g fiber, 10 g sugar). Made primarily of whole oats and whole wheat, these quilted nuggets have the pleasant sweetness of

crunch—seems to really hold up in the milk." **O'BRIEN:** "Crunches better than it looks or tastes." Our youngest tasters had a better opinion of the flavor. **BEN PRICE:** "Crunchy and really sweet!"

Kashi Organic Promise Autumn Wheat (6 g fiber, 7 g sugar). The slightly sweetened shredded-style whole-wheat biscuit from Kashi (a subsidiary of cereal giant Kellogg's) is made from only three ingredients: organic whole-grain wheat, organic evaporated cane juice, natural flavor. Our panel seemed to appreciate Autumn Wheat's natural appearance and subtle sweetness. **MAUREEN PRICE** said she thought "natural cereal wouldn't taste as good as this does. It's sweeter than it appears and not too dry. I would eat this." **TONY O'BRIEN** wasn't sure the cereal lived up to its potential, saying, "It's not

Flummoxed by Cereal Options?

To make a healthy choice, keep these tips in mind

- 1 "Whole" should describe the grain listed as the first ingredient.
- 2 Look for 5 grams or more fiber per serving.
- 3 Keep to around 200 calories per serving or less.
- 4 If you watch your sodium, don't go above 350 milligrams per serving.
- 5 Look for less than 12 grams of sugar per serving but keep in mind that raisins and other dried fruits in cereals will naturally boost the sugar content.

Other whole-grain cereals EW liked:
Post: Grape-Nuts, Bran Flakes, Shredded Wheat 'n Bran
General Mills: Fiber One, Fiber One Honey Clusters
Kashi: Go Lean, Heart to Heart








DAN TESHA: cereal eaters, which included two kids. Sweet and crunchy came out on top. Here's what our panelists had to say.

Barbara's Bakery Puffins Original (1 g fiber, 5 g sugar). Puffins, perhaps Barbara's best known cereal,

"a hint of brown sugar" (the third ingredient). Tasters rated this cereal number 2, seeming to like it more for its crunchy texture than its flavor. **TESHA:** "The texture makes you want more, even though the taste is kind of bland. Really fun to chew!" **FOSTER:** "Good

as good as it looks like it should be." The kid crowd, who both liked the cereal, were in disagreement about its flavor. **HANNAH BURRIS** liked the cereal because it was only "a little sweet" while **BEN PRICE** said it "tastes pretty good but needs to be sweeter."

THE TASTING PANEL:
DAN TESHA, graduate student
MAUREEN PRICE, cereal aficionado
LIZ FOSTER, runner
BEN PRICE, 3rd-grader
TONY O'BRIEN, parent, The Retail Pan Company
HANNAH BURRIS, 6th-grader

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3900 Cypress Drive Petaluma, CA 94954
 Phone: 707.765.2273 Fax: 707.765.2927
 www.BarbarasBakery.com