Granola

3 cups old-fashioned rolled oats  
1 cup raw, unsalted sunflower seeds and/or pumpkin seeds  
1/2 tablespoon wheat germ (optional)  
1/2 tablespoon ground cinnamon  
2 tablespoons canola oil or 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted  
1/2 cup honey

3/4 cups chopped pecans or slivered almonds  
1/2 tablespoon flaxseed (optional)  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1 cup dried fruits (raisins, apricots, dates, figs, cherries, etc.)

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees.
2. Grease a large baking sheet.
3. In a large bowl, combine the rolled oats, nuts, seeds, wheat germ, flaxseed, ground cinnamon and salt.
4. In a small bowl, stir together the oil or melted butter and honey. Pour this mixture over the dry ingredients and toss together, making sure all the dry ingredients are coated with the liquid.
5. Spread onto the prepared baking sheet.
6. Bake for 30-45 minutes or until golden brown.
7. Remove the pan and stir the ingredients every 15-20 minutes to make sure the mixture browns evenly. (The browner the granola gets, without burning, the crunchier the granola will be.)
8. When the granola has reached desired brownness, remove the pan from the oven and place it on a wire rack to cool.
9. The granola may be sticky when you remove it from the oven, but it will become crisp and dry as it cools. Make sure to break up any large clumps while the mixture is still warm.
10. When the granola has cooled completely, mix in the dried fruits.
11. Serve with plain yogurt or milk.
12. Can be stored in an airtight container for several weeks.

Cold cereal as we know it was invented in the early 1900s by the Kellogg brothers of Battle Creek, Michigan. John Kellogg believed heavy breakfasts were bad for people and that they should eat only vegetables and grains. In those days a kind of cold cereal was made by making thin biscuits, baking them, crushing them, and then baking the crumbs again. The crumbs were so tough they had to be soaked overnight in order to be chewable the next day.

In most homes at that time, a porridge of oats or wheat was cooked all night and served warm for breakfast. Kellogg wanted a cereal that was ready to eat and could be kept in a box. His younger brother, Keith, worked with him to invent this new food. In 1894, the brothers made a mistake and left a batch of soaked wheat kernels out overnight. The next day, they discovered that when the damp wheat berries were pushed through rollers, each made a flake. They called it “Granose” and sold it as a health food.

Grains supply your body with carbohydrates, protein, iron, thiamine and niacin. The US Department of Agriculture recommends six to 11 servings of grain a day per person, depending on the age of the person. Cereals are a great way to get some of the servings you need from the grain group. Bread, pasta, muffins, tortillas and hamburger buns are also made from grains. Rice, oats and barley are whole grains that can be eaten as hot breakfast cereals or added to soups and other dishes. The grain most widely grown in Oklahoma is hard winter wheat. Hard wheats are best for making breads that keep for a long time. Soft wheats are used more often in pastries. Oklahoma is the number two producer of winter wheat out of all the 42 other states that grow it. Other grains grown in Oklahoma are oats, barley, corn, sorghum and rye.