

COWBOY TRAIL MIX

Did you know that horses and people eat some of the same foods? It's true! Horses can eat carrots, apples and even oatmeal. In fact, there are horse owners in European countries, such as England and Germany, who wake up early in the morning to make their horses a big bucket of oatmeal for breakfast.

However, horses eat other things that keep them healthy that people do not eat, such grass and hay. The foods that horses and people eat are the source of important nutrients, including carbohydrates, fat, protein, vitamins, minerals, and water.

In this activity you will create Cowboy Trail Mix using foods from your home to represent the nutrients that a horse eats and learn about the importance of nutrition for humans and horses.

Materials you will need:

- **Golden Grahams/Life cereal/square pretzels**
(Representing carbohydrates in the form of forage.)
- **Popcorn or Corn Pops cereal**
(Representing carbohydrates in the form of formulated horse feed and grains.)
- **Honey Nut Cheerios or Honey Bunches of Oats cereal**
(Representing fats.)
- **Coco Puffs or Cocoa Krispies cereal**
(Representing protein.)
- **M&M's**
(Representing vitamins and minerals.)
- **Large bowl**
- **Measuring cup**
- **Snack bags**
- **Water**

To read about Hall of Fame horses who eat human food, check out [Maddon's Bright Eyes](#), [First Down Dash](#), and [Kawah Bar](#).

Steps

1. You will scoop 1 measuring cup of each item and dump it into your large bowl.

a. Golden Grahams (Representing Forage)

Forage, such as grass in the pasture or hay, is the most important part of a horse's diet and the primary source of energy from carbohydrates. Horses should eat 2% of their body weight in forage every day. For humans, carbohydrates are also an important source of energy, and complex carbohydrates provide us with fiber.

b. Popcorn (Representing Formulated Feeds & Grains)

Formulated horse feeds and grains provide supplemental energy, vitamins and minerals to balance out the nutrients a horse obtains from forage and provide a more concentrated source of energy from carbohydrates. Formulated horse feeds and grains should be limited to no more than .5% of a horse's body weight per feeding. For humans, cereal grains can be a good source of starchy carbohydrates for energy and complex carbohydrates which provide fiber and help keep the gut healthy!

c. Honey Nut Cheerios (Representing Fats)

In addition to carbohydrates, fats are an important energy source for horses. Fats provide the most concentrated source of energy and can be provided in small amounts as a part of a formulated feed or by supplementing vegetable oil. For humans, fat provides an energy source and is vital for brain function.

d. Coco Puffs (Representing Protein)

Protein is vital for building cells in the horse's body, which makes it especially important for young, growing horses and pregnant mares. Just like horses, protein serves as the building blocks of cells in the human body and are part of what helps you build strong muscles!

e. M&M's (Representing Vitamins and Minerals)

Vitamins and minerals are important for maintaining a horse's cellular functions and can be added to a horse's diet if they are lacking from other feed sources such as forage or grain. For humans, vitamins and minerals are equally important, and are often supplemented through pill and gummies!

2. Mix all the items in the bowl.

3. Now, you can use your measuring cup to scoop out and put the mixture into snack bags. Don't forget to pour yourself a big glass of water to go along with your trail mix. After all, water is the most important nutrient for horses AND people! Enjoy!