

Have Your Breakfast and Drink It, Too

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BOCA RATON, Fla. (AP) — If you don't have time to sit down for a bowl of cereal in the morning, companies are hoping you'll want to drink your breakfast.

As companies struggle to grow cereal sales in the U.S., Kellogg and General Mills are preparing to roll out breakfast drinks.

At an industry conference Wednesday, Kellogg CEO John Bryant said one way the company will redefine cereal is with its "Breakfast To Go" milk-based drink, which will be rolled out nationally this year. A day before, General Mills said it's testing a dairy-based breakfast shake called "BFast" that has whole grains and the nutrition of a bowl of cereal and milk, including fiber, protein, vitamins and whole grains. The drink is currently being tested in the Northeast.

In separate remarks, both companies noted that a similar drink called "Up & Go" by Sanitarium Health and Wellbeing Co. is performing strongly in Australia, with about 10 percent to 20 percent of the cereal business.

The broader idea of turning meals into drinks is getting more attention as people look for convenient ways to eat on the go. Even though it doesn't take much time to sit down for a bowl of cereal, people are increasingly looking for portable foods they can eat on the way to work or school.

PepsiCo, which makes Quaker oatmeal and recently got into the dairy business, has launched similar concepts overseas. It offers a Quaker cereal powder drink in China and last summer began testing a Quaker oatmeal drink in Brazil.

A spokesman for PepsiCo declined to say whether any similar products are planned for the U.S. But the company has underscored its strategy of "lifting and shifting" products from around the world for different markets.

PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi also has noted that the company is looking at ways to "drinkify" snacks, and gauging which type of foods and meals people might want in drink form. Already, the company's Naked juices are seen as falling into that general space because they are rich in various nutrients.

Kellogg also offers a Special K Protein shake but the drink is positioned more for people who are specifically looking to control their weight.

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