

Nutrition Newsletter

Cayuga County Health & Human Services WIC Program Spring 2006



Grains: What foods are grains?

Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another cereal grain is a grain product. Bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas and grits are examples of grain products. Grains are divided into 2 subgroups, whole grains and refined grains.

Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel: the bran, germ, and endosperm. Examples include: whole-wheat flour, bulgur, oatmeal, whole cornmeal and brown rice.

Refined grains have been milled, a process that removes the bran and germ. This is done to give grains a finer texture and improve their shelf life, but it also removes dietary fiber, iron, and many B vitamins. Some examples of refined grain products are: white flour, white bread and white rice.

Americans typically eat grain foods made with fortified refined grain rather than with whole grain. The current Dietary Guidelines encourage us to eat at least 6 servings a day of grain products with at least three servings being from whole grains.

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Ways to Add Whole Grain to Your Daily Diet

Check (✓) the suggestions that appeals to you.

Choose a quick and easy ready-to-eat or ready-to-cook whole grain cereal for breakfast.

Pour some dry, bite-size cereals into a bag, or grab a whole grain cereal bar to take along with you as a snack during your busy day.

Choose whole grain breads, tortillas, bagels, pita pockets and rolls.

Try whole grain muffins or cornbread made with whole grain corn meal.

Pop popcorn.

Enjoy lowfat whole grain crackers, baked tortilla chips or a brown rice cake as a snack.

Add whole grains to mixed dishes. Try adding some pearl barley, wild or brown rice to your favorite soup, stew or casserole.

Add oats to cookies or other desserts.

Try substituting whole grain flour for $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the white flour called for in recipes.

Choose whole grain pasta (macaroni, spaghetti, noodles), pancakes or waffles for a change of pace.

Try a hot or cold whole grain side dish (such as pilaf or stuffing) using brown or wild rice, kasha, bulgur or pearl barley.

Identify whole grain foods when you are shopping. Look for the words "whole grain" on the list of ingredients shown on the package. Look for a whole grain health claim on the package.