

# Whole Grains

## Tips & Information

### Real-life challenges...

- We don't get to choose which foods are provided to children.
- Whole grain products are more expensive.
- Kids seem reluctant to try new, healthy foods.
- Staff in charge of buying food don't know what ingredients to look for on labels.
- Staff don't see what they eat as relevant to their job or children's healthy eating.

### ...and how to overcome them

- ⇒ Contact whoever is responsible for food purchasing and request that snacks be whole grain. Check out **Snack Sense** for a list of ideas to get you started.
- ⇒ Most often, this is not the case. Many popular snack items, like Goldfish, English muffins, and tortillas, are now available in whole grain for the same price.
- ⇒ Use fun taste tests to understand kids' preferences and identify new items that kids enjoy to add to your regular menu (see example below).
- ⇒ Teach staff to look for whole grains like whole wheat, oats, and barley on nutrition labels. Many product labels now advertise that they are whole grain.
- ⇒ Teach staff about the importance of role modeling and involve them in taste testing.

### Check out some of these success stories!

One afterschool program was able to swap out snacks made with refined grains and replace them with whole grain, healthy options. The new foods tasted great and provided children with additional fiber and nutrients.

#### New ideas included:

- ★ Whole wheat pitas & tortillas
- ★ Granola
- ★ Whole grain mini bagels
- ★ Popcorn
- ★ Whole grain Goldfish crackers

Another program saw the opportunity to review current menu items and involve kids in developing a new menu.

They let kids vote each time they tried a new snack and tallied their responses to track new favorites!





# Did you know?

## The Scoop on Whole Grains

Did you know that eating a diet rich in **whole grains** can lower your risk for heart disease and diabetes? Whole grains contain fiber, vitamin E, and healthy fats. They help keep your blood sugar steady and your arteries clear. Whole grains also make you feel full longer. Refined "white" flour and sugar do not have these nutrients or health benefits. Eat whole grain products instead of refined ones whenever possible. You should also avoid the "empty calories" of added sugars. They offer no benefit other than energy.

- ★ Try to serve foods made with **whole grains** (like whole wheat, oats, barley, brown rice and popcorn), which are higher in fiber and nutrients than refined grains (like white rice, white bread, and cornflakes).
- ★ Refined grains, such as white rice or white flour, have both the bran and germ removed from the grain. Although vitamins and minerals are added back into refined grains after the milling process, they still don't have as many nutrients as whole grains do, and they don't provide as much fiber.
- ★ Look at the nutrition labels of breads and cereals and aim for products with at least 3 grams of fiber and no more than 5 grams of sugar per serving.



### Limit these snack foods:

- Sweetened cereals like Frosted Flakes, Fruit Loops, and Raisin Bran
- White bread and tortillas
- White rice, potatoes, "instant" grains
- Cookies, cakes, candies

### Did you know:

- ★ Whole grains are an important part of healthy snacking. Pair them with a fruit or vegetable for a well-rounded snack.
- ★ [check language from planet health about satiety and avoiding refined carbs/sugar crash]
- ★ Try to aim for snacks for kids that have between 100-200 calories. Nutrition labels can help!

### Examples of 1 Serving of Whole Grains

- 1 slice whole-grain bread
- 1/2 whole-grain English muffin, bagel, or bun
- 1 ounce of ready to eat whole-grain cereal
- 1/2 cup (cooked) oatmeal, brown rice, or whole-wheat pasta
- 5-6 whole-grain crackers
- 3 cups of popped popcorn

## Want to know more? Check out these other resources.

Harvard School of Public Health publishes an online nutrition news and resource center:

[www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/carbohydrates.html](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/carbohydrates.html)

The Whole Grains Council helps consumers find whole grain foods and understand their health benefits:

<http://www.wholegrainscouncil.org>

This section of the Food Guide Pyramid gives specific information on grains, and can be tailored for individual needs:

<http://mypyramid.gov/pyramid/grains.html>

Planning healthy celebrations can be particularly challenging. Foodplay offers some great suggestions:

[http://www.foodplay.com/downloads/FreeMaterials/Teachers/celebration\\_guide.pdf](http://www.foodplay.com/downloads/FreeMaterials/Teachers/celebration_guide.pdf)



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