

# MAKE HALF YOUR GRAINS WHOLE CONFERENCE

*April 20-22, 2009, Alexandria, VA*

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## SCHOOLS AND WHOLE GRAINS

Every day, about 30 million American children eat a school lunch, and another ten million have a school breakfast. Although these meals account for only about 11% of the meals our school-age kids eat (see Schools Hot Topics Fact Sheet in Section 4 for more specifics about school foods), the food served in schools can have a disproportionate influence on kids' dietary habits for life.

Schools have a unique opportunity to use classroom lessons, schoolyard gardens, and other innovative programs to reinforce and nurture good food examples served in the cafeteria. While school requirements have not yet caught up with the Whole Grains Revolution, countless schools across the country are taking a leadership role and showing the way.

This section highlights some of these best efforts, and includes:

### **The WGC School Food Survey**

Preliminary results from a new ongoing survey of school foodservice directors' attitudes toward whole grains, recently launched by the Whole Grains Council.

### **Low Cost, No Cost Ideas for Better School Lunches**

A small selection of easy ways to pump up the health in school meals.

### **The HealthierUS School Challenge**

Details of a voluntary USDA program that is the closest thing we have to "official" whole grain standards for schools.

- Overview of the HealthierUS School Challenge
- Criteria for awards, including whole grain criteria
- Complete specifications for which foods qualify as whole grains
- Whole Grain Fact Sheet, provided by the USDA to schools



# WHOLE GRAINS COUNCIL SCHOOL FOOD SURVEY

The Whole Grains Council has just launched an ongoing survey of school foodservice directors, to assess attitudes toward whole grains and implementation of them in school cafeterias. Our pilot survey launched on March 16, 2009, furnishing us with preliminary data from our first seventy school foodservice professionals just before this conference. Read on, to enjoy an interesting snapshot of whole grains in schools.

## Question 1: How often do you serve whole grains in your school?

Whole grains are not yet required at schools, but a great many schools have decided not to wait for school requirements to change; they're making sure their kids get more whole grains today. We found that the majority of our early responders serve whole grains at every meal.

1. How often do you serve whole grain foods at your school? Please check one.			
At every meal		39	56%
At least three times each week		23	33%
About once a week		6	9%
A few times a month		2	3%
About once a month		0	0%
Never, or very rarely		0	0%
Total		70	100%

## Questions 2 and 3: What kinds of whole grain foods do you serve?

We divided our query into lunch-type foods and breakfast-type foods, to focus in more clearly on the types of foods that schools serve most often. It was no surprise to learn that hamburger buns, bread, and pizza crust were most popular at lunch, with cold cereals and granola bars leading the pack for breakfast.

2. Which of the following lunch-type whole grain foods have you served in the last two months? Please check ALL that apply.			
Whole grain hamburger buns		52	74%
Whole grain hotdog buns		38	54%
Whole grain bread or rolls		58	83%
Whole grain pizza crust		57	81%
Whole grain wraps or tortillas		41	59%
Whole grain garden burgers		11	16%
Whole grain breadsticks		12	17%
Whole grain corn dogs		25	36%
Whole grain breaded chicken		34	49%
Whole grain pasta		34	49%
Brown rice		34	49%
Whole grain cookies		18	26%
Whole grain crackers		15	21%
Whole grain pretzels		14	20%
Whole grain chips (such as corn chips, SunChips)		44	63%
Other, please specify <a href="#">View Responses</a>		4	6%

**3.** Which of the following breakfast-type whole grain foods have you served in the last two months? Please check ALL that apply.

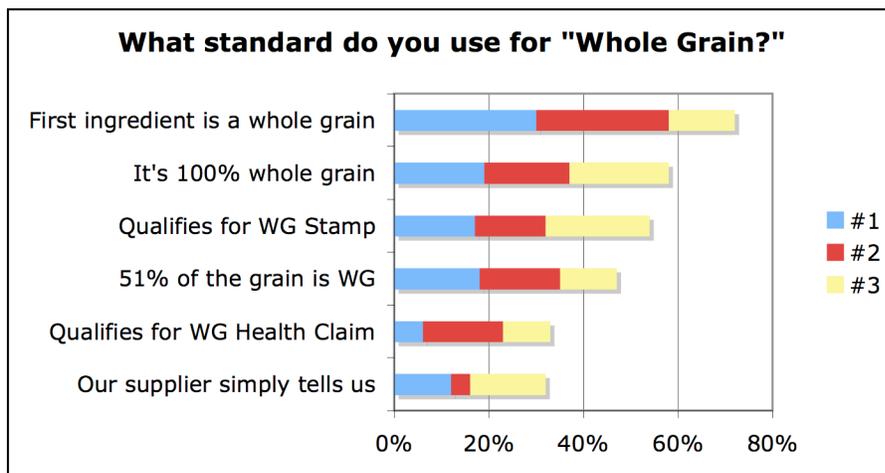
Whole grain muffins		17	25%
Whole grain English muffins		17	25%
Whole grain cold cereals		60	87%
Oatmeal (including instant)		34	49%
Whole grain hot cereals (other than oatmeal)		5	7%
Whole grain toaster pastries (such as PopTarts)		23	33%
Whole grain pastries (Danish, croissants, etc.)		5	7%
Whole grain granola bars or breakfast bars		38	55%
Other, please specify <a href="#">View Responses</a>		10	14%

Other foods mentioned by respondents included:

- various composed whole grain salads
- whole wheat dinner rolls
- whole grain pancakes, waffle sticks, and French toast sticks
- whole wheat bagels
- graham crackers

#### Question 4: But what IS a whole grain?

Since there is as yet no requirement to serve whole grains in schools, there is also no clear, universal definition of when a food qualifies as “whole grain.” So next we asked our school foodservice directors to tell us, *What standard(s) do you use for deciding a food “is whole grain?” Rank the standard you use most often as “1” then number any others you use, in order. Check “Don’t Use” if you never use that standard.*

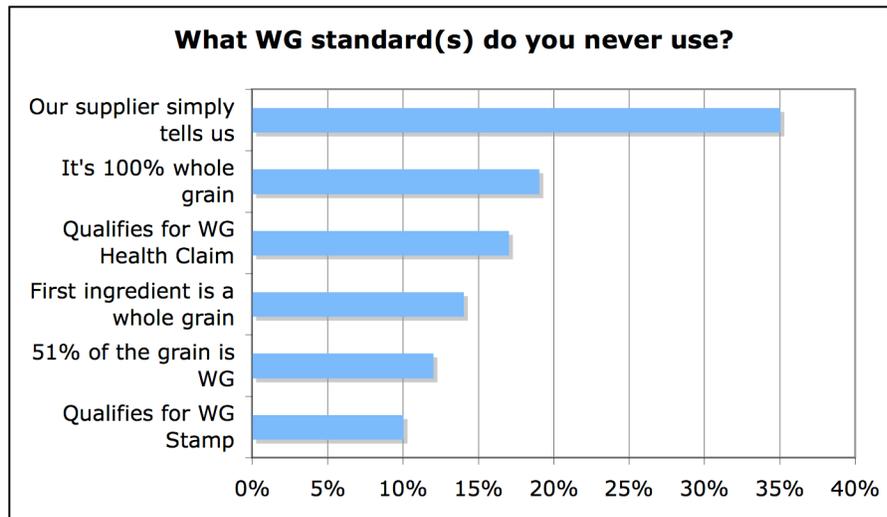


We asked them to rank their choices in order, then focused on their #1, #2 and #3 answers, as shown in the chart above.

Almost as interesting as learning which standards these school foodservice directors used, was learning which approaches they did *not* use. The least popular choice was simply believing the

supplier. 35% said they never used this approach, while another 34% placed this approach as their 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> choice.

We were pleased to see the Whole Grain Stamp place third, overall, as a standard for choosing whole grain foods, and equally pleased to see that the Whole Grain Stamp was cited *least* often as a standard that they “don’t use.”

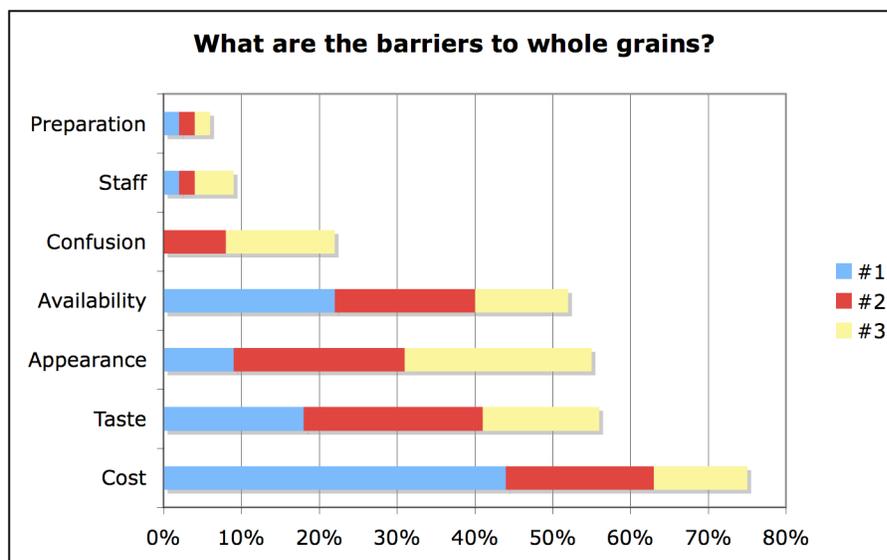


#### Question 5: What are the barriers to whole grains?

Anecdotally, we had heard many reasons for why whole grains might not be served at every meal – or ever, at some schools. We picked six of the reasons we had heard most often, and asked respondents, *What do you see as the barriers to serving more whole grains? Please rate these in order, where 1 is the toughest barrier for you to overcome. Check "not a barrier" if you feel this point is a non-issue at your school.*

The six potential barriers that we asked about were:

- **Cost – whole grains are more expensive.**  
Schools are on very tight budgets, and every penny in one product turns into millions.
- **Taste – our kids aren’t yet used to the stronger taste.**  
If new foods increase plate waste, or reduce participation, they can be counter-productive.
- **Appearance – they’re darker; our kids won’t try them.**  
Has the availability of white wheat helped with this issue?
- **Availability – hard to find the whole grain foods we need.**  
Schools deal with certain distributors, and put out bids in advance. Are the foods there?
- **Preparation – takes more time and labor.**  
Many schools don’t have kitchens or dishwashers, and need pre-prepared foods.
- **Staff – our staff resist changing to whole grains.**  
We’d heard this cited as a barrier, but were pleased to find it was not a major factor.
- **Confusion – we’re not sure which foods ARE whole grain.**  
You can’t serve more whole grains if you don’t know what a whole grain *is*.



As you can see in the chart above, cost was the top barrier cited individually with 44% saying it was the toughest barrier to overcome, and 75% of school foodservice directors citing cost as one of their top three barriers. Taste, appearance, and availability also factored large, with a majority citing these three as one of the top three barriers to serving more whole grains. Specifying and preparing whole grains seem to be the least of schools' worries.

**Question 6: How have you overcome barriers like these?**

School foodservice directors are a plucky bunch, not given to folding under pressure. (Think about it. If you've tried to get your own kids to eat good food at home, imagine doing it day after day with thousands of kids. It takes a certain resolute personality!)

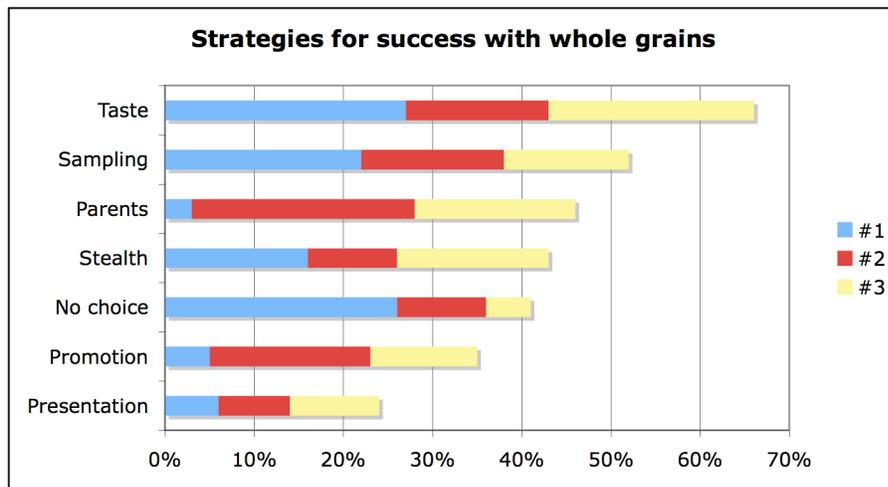
We wanted to learn more about the strategies school foodservice directors use for whole grain success, so we asked, *What has led to success with whole grains, at your school? Please rank these in order, where 1 is the most successful approach you've found. If you've never tried a particular approach, mark it "don't use."*

The six success strategies were:

- **Taste** – we make sure everything is delicious.
- **Stealth** – we hide whole grains and don't tell the kids.
- **Sampling** – we let kids try new foods without risk.
- **Promotion** – we educate and get the kids excited.
- **No choice** – we just serve 'em, with no other option.
- **Parents** – we do wellness programs, newsletters, etc.
- **Presentation** – we use special displays in the lunch line.

The most surprising finding from this question was that 29% of our early responders said that they never use "stealth" to sneak whole grains into kids' tummies. On reflection, however, this

may be related to the fact that so many schools are not set up to cook from scratch. This makes it difficult to add oatmeal to a meatloaf, or bury whole grain pasta in a casserole.



Taste is always the number one factor in consumer satisfaction, whether foods are being eaten at home, at a restaurant or in a school cafeteria. “Hold your nose and eat it; it’s good for you!” rarely works with adults, let alone kids, so these wise school foodservice professionals know the burden is on them to make whole grains simply taste good. Then, the recipe for success was to add a little sampling, so the kids can discover the good taste without blowing all their lunch money on an unknown – and get the parents involved.

Schools that send home newsletters with a “food of the month” and other nutrition tips, for instance, find it helps when new foods encountered at school get reinforced at home. This turns out to be a two-way street. Parents who want their kids to eat healthier may be tired of always being the ones to introduce new tastes; knowing the foods for which the schools have already done the groundwork helps!

**Question 7: How much more would you pay for whole grains?**

Since we suspected cost would be a major barrier to adoption of whole grains, we included a question fine-tuning respondents’ attitudes to the cost issue, by asking, *How much more are you willing to pay for whole grains? You get what you pay for, generally, and whole grains include two to three times the nutrients of refined grains. Does this added value justify paying more? Check the one answer that best describes your position.*

Some respondents felt it was important to qualify their answer on this question:

- *I would pay extra, if a product is exceptional and kids like it.*
- *Hard to pay 1 cent more, but we would still try.*
- *It would depend on how it affected the menu cost.*
- *It depends on the popularity of the item and the taste profile.*
- *Cost is not considered.*

**7.** How much more are you willing to pay for whole grains? You get what you pay for, generally, and whole grains include two to three times the nutrients of refined grains. Does this added value justify paying more? Check the one answer that best describes your position.

I cannot pay even a penny more for whole grains.		17	25%
I would pay up to 5% more for whole grains.		37	54%
I would pay up to 10% more for whole grains.		8	12%
I would pay up to 15% more for whole grains.		1	1%
Other, please specify <a href="#">View Responses</a>		6	9%
Total		69	100%

As the responses above show, the majority of respondents were willing to pay a small premium for whole grains, with most answering that they'd be willing to pay 5% extra for whole grain foods. In light of budgeting reality at all schools, this willingness seems to indicate the high esteem in which school foodservice directors hold whole grains.

That said, 25% say they cannot pay even a penny extra for whole grains, let alone the large premiums charged for some products. One regional food coop buyer told us a few years ago that she paid 6¢ each for white hamburger buns, but that her supplier wanted 15¢ for whole wheat buns – and insisted on selling them only in 8-packs, which added hugely to labor costs and waste. On the other hand, one of our respondents stated, “We pay 1-2% extra” and many larger districts have told us that their bargaining power allows them to insist on price parity between refined and whole grain foods.

### **Question 8: How can manufacturers help?**

Since the Whole Grains Council works regularly with over 200 manufacturers of whole grain products, we feel we're in an ideal position to act as messenger between the schools and food companies. With this in mind, we asked, *What could manufacturers do to help you serve more whole grains? We are gathering input from schools which we will pass on to manufacturers of breads, pizzas, cereals, and other grain products. This is your chance to give them as many constructive suggestions as you can think of – or to add any other comments.*

We got an earful with this question; more than half of our early respondents took the time to write extra comments. “Make it taste good, look appealing and not be too expensive so we can afford to serve it,” was a comment that summed up the general feeling. For ease of review, we've grouped all comments by category and listed them here.

### **Cost and availability of whole grains**

- *We have had more pizzas offered in the past year with whole grain crusts but price has prohibited us from purchasing most of them. We need more WG pasta choices at affordable pricing and also offered by USDA [Commodity Program].*
- *Having less expensive whole grain options would go a long way to our serving more. Budgets are so tight and we are being hit on all sides with price increases that we cannot pass along.*
- *Run rebates for whole grain items to counteract the high cost per case.*
- *They need to make more whole grain foods and not charge a lot more for them.*
- *Reduce the costs of the product.*
- *Cost is an issue. Limit production on white flour items.*
- *More choices and ample supply.*

- *Whole grain PopTarts are almost double [the cost of] regular. I think the manufacturers should keep the cost down so we can offer more whole grains.*
- *Make them cost effective*
- *Make them tasty and affordable. With the market like it is and school nutrition budgets ever tighter, we need to change the culture so that whole grains are the first choice and manufacturers don't have to take [the bran and germ] out to put them back in!*

### **Product quality, taste, and appearance**

- *Don't give schools the "bottom of the barrel" product—our kids deserve better and if we are going to test the product our time needs to be used wisely.*
- *Basically we need more choices that are appealing to children.*
- *Better tasting products. Products that hold better on a hot line.*
- *Make a variety of items available. Need white appearance.*
- *Keep whole grain "blended" items to help kids transition to heartier flavor.*
- *Kids should not be able to detect the grain in the mouthfeel. "Gritty" product is not well accepted by them.*
- *We need breadsticks that taste good and are at least 51% whole grain. We need a pizza crust that holds and ships well.*
- *Keep the flavor good! Offer more whole grain and less that is not.*
- *I would like to see more of the pizza (especially the stuffed crust) in whole grains. We are a small school, but the children do like the whole grain rolls - maybe a smaller type ready-to-serve roll in whole grain. Whole grain bagels are hard to find with my distributors.*
- *Some of the whole grain in pizza crust is not very tasty*
- *Make sure that flavor and appearance are not sacrificed to add whole grains. If the food still tastes good, our students will eat it, and not care whether it contains whole grains or not.*
- *Just keep the taste good; kids are getting used to it.*
- *I think experience has taught us all that you can't put [whole grain] in everything, and certainly not all at once. It has to taste good. Market to/educate parents so kids experience it at home. Schools support good eating habits—difficult to change alone.*

### **Labeling and policy issues**

- *Be clear on % whole grain used.*
- *Label the food as "whole grain"...sometimes the battle is knowing if the food qualifies as a whole grain item.*
- *Make the servings = 1 bread serving increments, as it pertains to CN labeling for school foods; for whole grain cereals, please keep sugars natural - not HFCS - we can't use if HFCS is used (that goes for all whole grain foods for that matter, not just breakfast cereals).*
- *Make this a mandatory requirement!*
- *What is the standard? 50 or 51% (policy issue).*

We'd like to end with this final heart-felt message from one school foodservice director:

*Try to keep the food costs down so that the schools can afford to feed the students the proper foods they are supposed to get. The industry needs to do whatever they can to get the food to the students to help fight the obesity problem we have in the U.S. They need to set an example that they care for the children. Help the schools out. Pass the extra cost on to the fast food chains that are not helping with the problem of obesity. We need to start at the base roots and that is at school. Many students depend on the school lunch program for their main meal for the day. It needs to be as nutritious as possible.*

### **About our Early Responders**

*We launched the Whole Grains Council School Food Survey on March 16, 2009. From that date until March 31, seventy early respondents completed the survey. Because our respondents were self-selected and this survey does not purport to be a scientific sample, we would like to share the demographics of our respondents.*

<i>States represented:</i>	26	
<i>Size of school:</i>	11%	<i>serve fewer than 50 meals daily</i>
	46%	<i>serve 500 to 2,500 meals daily</i>
	26%	<i>serve 2,500 to 10,000 meals daily</i>
	10%	<i>serve 10,000 to 50,000 meals daily</i>
	3%	<i>serve 50,000 to 150,000 meals daily</i>
	4%	<i>serve more than 150,000 meals daily</i>
<i>Meals served</i>	100%	<i>serve lunch</i>
	90%	<i>serve breakfast</i>
	41%	<i>serve snacks, including after-school programs</i>
<i>Grade levels served</i>	68%	<i>Preschool or HeadStart</i>
	94%	<i>Elementary (roughly K-5)</i>
	94%	<i>Middle School (roughly 6-8)</i>
	93%	<i>High School (roughly 9-12)</i>
	0%	<i>College or University</i>
<i>Public vs. Private</i>	90%	<i>Public School</i>
	10%	<i>Private School</i>

*We plan to keep this survey open to log ongoing changes in attitudes to whole grains. If you are a school foodservice director and would like to register your views on our survey, please visit <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB228X4GDQ9W9>*

# LOW COST / NO COST WAYS TO GET KIDS TO EAT HEALTHIER FOODS

Tight school budgets mean that schools must get creative to improve kids' health with low-cost or no-cost initiatives. Here are a few surprising ways to increase consumption of healthy foods, and a few interesting websites that seek to inspire the best in school lunches.

- **Offer Restricted Debit Cards that can be used only to purchase health foods.**  
Meal prepayment systems are used in 76 percent of schools. A study by Brian Wansink<sup>1</sup> at the Cornell Food & Brand Lab showed that students with unrestricted debit cards make the unhealthiest choices, compared to those paying cash or paying with restricted debit cards.
- **Ask students to pay cash for desserts, fries, soft drinks, etc.**  
They're more apt to buy milk, water and fruit instead of these items.<sup>1</sup>
- **Use creative copywriting.**  
In a recent study, kids ate nearly twice as many carrots when they were described as "X-ray vision carrots" – and they continued to eat about 50% more carrots in subsequent days even after the enticing name was removed.<sup>2</sup>
- **Do you want fries with that?**  
We know the suggestion to add fries is often successful. Turns out this works for healthy foods too. In one study, 40% of children took fruit when it was merely on display, but the number rose to 70% when cafeteria workers said, "Would you like some fruit with that?"<sup>1</sup>
- **Have recess before lunch.**  
A 1995 study<sup>3</sup> showed that kids who had recess before lunch – rather than after – wasted less food and milk, behaved better in the lunchroom (because they'd already let off all that steam!), and paid attention better back in class.

## ***www.smarterlunchrooms.org***

*Brian Wansink, of Cornell's Food and Brand Lab, brings his creative experiments in Mindless Eating to the world of school foods.*

## ***www.lunchlessons.org or www.chefann.com***

*Website of Chef Ann Cooper, "Renegade Lunch Lady" who is best known for her work in creating a fresh-food-and-gardening approach to school lunches in Berkeley, California.*

## ***www.Parentsagainstjunkfood.org***

*A site founded by Christopher Kimball, Cooks' Illustrated Editor, who was spurred to activism by the choices offered to his young son in school.*

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<sup>1</sup> When Nudging in the Lunch Line Might be a Good Thing" Economic Research Service / USDA, Lisa Mancino and Joanne Guthrie.

<sup>2</sup> Wansink, B et al. 2009 study funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

<sup>3</sup> Gettlinger, MJ et al. Journal of the American Dietetic Association, 1996 96: 906-8.

# THE HEALTHIERUS SCHOOL CHALLENGE

Since 2004, USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has run a voluntary program called the HealthierUS School Challenge, recognizing nutrition excellence in schools. Although the program is voluntary, its guidelines have become important standards for schools and the manufacturers serving them, since overall school food guidelines still hew to standards of the 1995 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Under the HealthierUS School Challenge program, elementary schools can become certified as Bronze, Silver, or Gold (or the recently-added Gold of Distinction) schools for meeting certain criteria. The criteria are demanding – and the award is not given out lightly. At this time in April 2009, just 437 schools in 24 states are currently certified – that’s less than one percent of all U.S. public elementary schools. Which state has the most awards? Kentucky. The statistics show that certain districts in certain states garner most of the awards, showing that certain pockets of strong leadership are making the commitment to better school food.

State	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Alabama			7
Arizona		1	1
California			7
Colorado			1
Florida		5	
Illinois		2	
Iowa		1	4
Kentucky	24	7	92
Maryland	20	24	
Massachusetts		2	3
Mississippi		3	
Montana			2

State	Bronze	Silver	Gold
New York			3
North Carolina			4
North Dakota		1	4
Ohio			1
Oklahoma			1
Pennsylvania			1
South Carolina		5	48
South Dakota		4	
Tennessee		3	6
Texas	10	12	14
Virginia	37	31	** 46
Washington		1	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>245</b>

*\*\* all the Gold schools in Virginia are in Prince William County, under the leadership of foodservice director Serena Suthers, a speaker at this conference.*

To be certified for the HealthierUS School Challenge, elementary schools must satisfy criteria in five different areas:

- serve healthy food in the cafeteria
- adhere to FNS guidelines for other foods served outside of lunch
- provide nutrition education to students
- offer a certain amount of physical activity for kids
- maintain high levels of participation in their school lunch program

We’ve listed the specific criteria on the following page.

## HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria at a Glance<sup>4</sup>

	<b>Bronze</b>	<b>Silver</b>	<b>Gold</b>	<b>Gold of Distinction</b>
Average Daily Participation at least	62%	70%	70%	70%
Meet USDA nutrition standards for school lunches	√	√	√	√
Offer a different vegetable daily (dark green or orange 3 or more day; legumes at least once a week)	√	√	√	√
Offer a different fruit daily (fresh, frozen, canned, dried or 100% juice (juice no more than 1 day a week))	√ (fresh 1 day)	√ (fresh 1 day)	√ (fresh 2 days)	√ (fresh 2 days)
<b>Offer at least 1 serving of whole grains (see following 7 pages for HUSSC definitions of whole grains)</b>	<b>3 or more days</b>	<b>3 or more days</b>	<b>Daily</b>	<b>Daily</b>
Offer 1% or fat-free (skim) milk daily	√	√	√	√
Meet criteria for “competitive” foods a. total fat ≤ 35% (except nut butter, seeds, nuts, reduced-fat cheese) b. trans fats ≤ 0.5g per serving c. saturated fat ≤ 10% d. sugar ≤ 35% (except fruits, vegetables, milk) e. sodium ≤ 600 mg entrées, and ≤ 480mg non-entrées f. servings ≤ NSLP standard size	In the cafeteria, during meals	In the cafeteria, during meals	Throughout the school, all day	Throughout the school, all day, with tighter limits for sodium OR more phys ed
Meet criteria for “competitive” drinks a. milk is 1% or fat-free; ≤ 8 oz b. 100% fruit or veggie juice, no added sugar; ≤ 6 oz c. water (no flavor, carbonation, etc.)	In the cafeteria, during meals	In the cafeteria, during meals	Throughout the school, all day	Throughout the school, all day, with tighter limits for sodium OR more phys ed
Offer an organized nutrition education program to most students, involving the classroom, cafeteria and home.	√	√	√	√
Use of food as a reward prohibited	√	√	√	√
Offer physical education / activity daily to all students for a minimum average of minutes per week	45 minutes weekly	45 minutes weekly	90 minutes weekly	150 minutes weekly (or 90+ tighter limits on sodium)
Denying or requiring phys ed as punishment is prohibited	√	√	√	√

<sup>4</sup> Note: To offer an overview of the HealthierUS School Challenge at a glance, this table is condensed from the 4-page chart found on the FNS website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthierus/index.html>. Schools seeking to be certified under the HUSSC program are urged to view the original chart, to understand every nuance and requirement clearly.

## HealthierUS School Challenge Whole Grains Resource

This resource outlines the HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSCC) whole grains criteria and offers additional background information to help school food authorities (SFAs) identify whole grain products and offer them more frequently in their menus. FNS has updated this resource to reflect the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGAs), which recommend that children and adults consume at least half of their grains as whole grains. These criteria are not required for school meal programs; they apply only for those elementary schools that submit an application for a HealthierUS School Challenge award.

### 2008 HUSCC Whole Grain Criteria:

- **Gold/Gold of Distinction**  
At least one serving of a whole grain food must be offered each day in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
- **Bronze/Silver**  
At least one serving of a whole grain food must be offered three (3) or more times (days) per week in the NSLP.

Whole grain food is defined as “whole grain as the primary ingredient by weight”, i.e., whole grain listed first in the ingredient statement. Serving is defined by the USDA Food Buying Guide.

### How Can Schools Comply with the HUSCC Whole Grain Criteria?

FNS realizes that some schools may face challenges in finding products which meet the criteria above. Menu planners should count whole grains to meet the criteria as follows:

1. For a Bronze or Silver Award, a whole grain food must be offered at least 3 days per week. For Gold or Gold Award of Distinction, a whole grain food must be offered every day. Menu planners are encouraged to serve a variety of whole grain foods and may not serve the same whole grain product every day to count for the HUSCC criteria.
2. Whole grain food products must be at least the portion size of one Grains/Breads serving as defined in the *USDA Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*.
3. Whole grain foods that meet the HUSCC criteria are categorized into two groups:

Group A: Food products with **whole grain(s) as the primary ingredient by weight**.

Group B: Food products **with whole grain(s) as the primary grain ingredient by weight**.

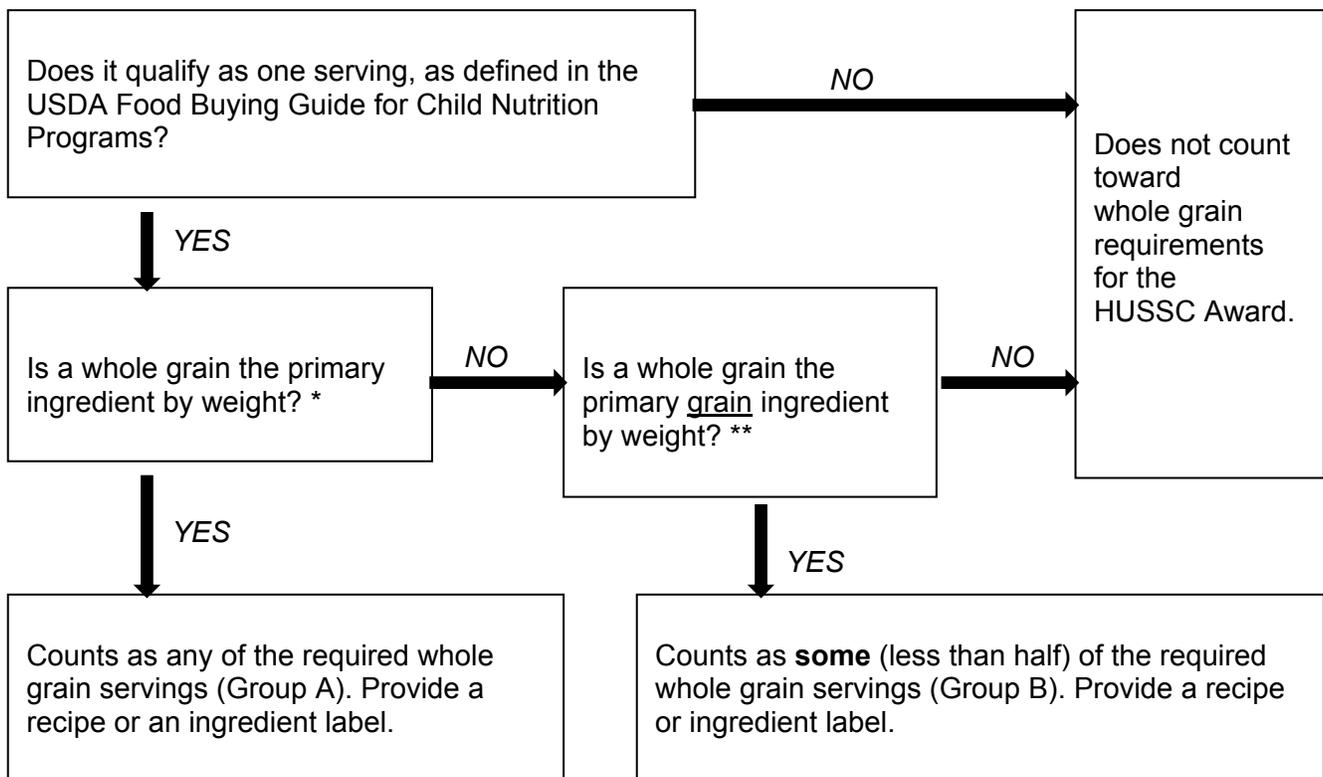
When a school-made recipe contains multiple whole grains, it will qualify under Group A if the total weight of the whole grains is more than the weight of any other ingredient. A recipe will qualify under Group B if the total weight of whole grains is more than the weight of the primary grain ingredient. The same principle applies to purchased products that contain multiple grains. Use Attachment B for required documentation for multiple grain products.

- Whole grain products from Group A must be the majority of whole grain foods offered each week. For example, for a Gold/Gold Award of Distinction award, a food product meeting Group A would need to be offered three or more days each week and for a Bronze/Silver award, two or more days each week. A whole grain food from Group B may be counted as a whole grain food for the remainder of the days in each week. Foods from Group A may be used to meet all the required Grains/Breads.

**How Do I Know If a Whole Grain Product Meets HUSSC Criteria?**

There are many foods labeled as whole grains, such as pizza crusts, buns, breads, tortillas, and other products. It is helpful to know which products meet the HUSSC criteria. The chart below will assist you in determining if your whole grain product meets the HUSSC criteria.

## HealthierUS School Challenge CRITERIA FOR WHOLE GRAIN PRODUCTS



\* Includes products with a total whole grain weight that exceeds the weight of any other ingredient.  
 \*\* Includes products with a total whole grain weight that exceeds the weight of the primary refined grain ingredient.

## What is a Whole Grain?

Whole Grains consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel. The kernel has three parts—the bran, the germ, and the endosperm. Usually the kernel is cracked, crushed, or flaked during the milling process. If the finished product retains the same relative proportions of bran, germ, and endosperm as the original grain, it is considered a whole grain.

When you see the following wording, you will know that, by regulation (FDA Standards of Identity), they describe whole grains that are used as ingredients:

- Cracked wheat
- Crushed wheat
- Whole wheat flour
- Graham flour
- Entire wheat flour
- Bromated whole wheat flour
- Whole durum wheat flour

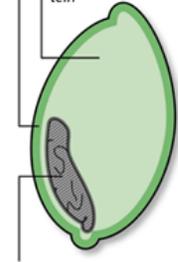
### Whole grain kernel

#### Bran

"Outer shell" protects seed  
Fiber, B vitamins, trace minerals

#### Endosperm

Provides energy  
Carbohydrates, protein



#### Germ

Nourishment for the seed  
Antioxidants, vitamin E, B-vitamins

### Common and usual names for other whole grains are noted below:

- The word *whole* listed before a grain, for example, *whole* corn.
- The words *berries* and *groats* are also used to designate whole grains, for example, wheat berries or oat groats.
- Rolled oats and oatmeal (including old-fashioned, quick-cooking, and instant oatmeal).
- Other whole grain products that do not use the word “whole” in their description, for example, brown rice, brown rice flour, or wild rice.

A more comprehensive list of whole grains is provided as Attachment A.

### Grain products (ingredients) that are not whole grains:

Flour has been designated by the FDA as the term for refined wheat flour. The following ingredients are not whole grains:

flour	phosphated flour	hominy grits
white flour	self-rising flour	hominy
wheat flour	self-rising wheat flour	farina
all-purpose flour	enriched self-rising flour	semolina
unbleached flour	bread flour	degerminated corn meal
bromated flour	cake flour	enriched rice
enriched bromated flour	durum flour	rice flour
enriched flour	corn grits	couscous
instantized flour		

## Grain products that may or may not be whole grain:

- “Pot” or “Scotch” barley and “pearl” or “pearled” barley are *not* whole grains because bran has been removed. Look for the words whole barley or whole grain barley on the product label or in the ingredient statement. However, the FDA has recognized that “dehulled barley” is a whole grain.
- “Stone ground” does not necessarily mean that the product is whole grain. “Stone ground” describes the process used for making the flour or meal. Look for “whole” in combination with “stone ground” in the ingredient statement.
- Whole corn “treated with lime” (often used in tortilla products, and may be called “masa”) would only be a whole grain if documentation from the manufacturer indicates that the manufacturing process used to prepare the corn with lime retains the pericarp, or bran layer.
- When a grain name, such as corn, oats, or rye flour is listed in the ingredient statement, but no descriptor (such as “whole grain” for corn or “brown” for rice) is listed, the SFA needs to obtain further documentation from the manufacturer before purchasing the food product to meet the HUSSC criteria.

## How Do I Purchase Whole Grain Products or Develop Whole Grain Product Descriptions (Specifications)?

Use the following information to guide your decisions.

- A. Whole grains as the primary ingredient by weight of the product.** Specify that a whole grain will be the first ingredient on the ingredient label or the primary ingredient by weight. Ask that food product labels and ingredient statements be submitted with the vendor’s bid on whole grain products. If the first ingredient is not a whole grain, and there are multiple whole grains in the ingredient list, request documentation from the manufacturer as to the weight of the first ingredient and the total weight of all of the whole grain ingredients. If the total weight of the whole grain ingredients is greater than the weight of the first ingredient, the food product would meet Group A.
- B. Whole grains as the primary *grain* ingredients of the product.** Specify that a whole grain be the first grain ingredient of the product. Ask that food product labels and ingredient statements be submitted with the vendor’s bid on whole grain products. If the first grain ingredient is not a whole grain but there are multiple whole grain ingredients in the product, require the manufacturer to complete a product formulation statement documenting the weight of the first (refined) grain ingredient and the total weight of the whole grains. If the total weight of the whole grain ingredients is greater than the weight of the first grain ingredient, the food product would meet Group B.
  - **Flour blends of whole grain and enriched flours --** Some manufacturers make products using a specialty blend of two or more flours that is part whole grain and part refined flour. In this case, the manufacturer must provide documentation to show that the primary grains in the product are whole grains to meet Group B.

Regardless of the type of whole grain food purchased, ensure in your specification that the serving size of the whole grain food is equal to a serving of Grains/Bread as defined in the Food Buying Guide, pages 3.15-3.16.

### **Looking at the Whole Product:**

Before purchasing new products containing whole grains, look carefully at the whole product, not just the whole grains. In keeping with the 2005 DGA recommendations, SFAs should offer whole grain products that are low in sugars and/or fat. The goal is to offer nutritious whole grain foods that students can enjoy. Including a dessert, on a limited basis as an element of a reimbursable meal can have the positive effect of increasing acceptance and encouraging children to more fully participate in the meal service. We do not support using dessert items to meet the bread requirement in every meal, but we do acknowledge the benefit on occasion.

### **Storing Whole Grains:**

As with all foods, use FIFO (First In, First Out) principles when storing whole grains. Because whole grain ingredients (e.g., whole wheat flour, brown rice) retain the bran and the oil-rich germ, these items may turn rancid when stored in warm food storage areas. To increase the shelf life, store these products in a cool, dry place in air tight containers. If the whole grain products will not be used within a short period of time, they should be stored in the refrigerator or freezer.

### **Taste-testing of Whole Grain Products:**

Some students may not be familiar with whole grain products. To encourage them to try different products, schools can have student taste tests to select products which have the most student appeal. By documenting the taste tests and student preferences, SFAs may develop a list of approved whole grain products for purchase.

Introduce whole grains in student favorites, such as pizza or spaghetti, and gradually increase the amount of whole grains in recipes over the school year as students adapt to the changes.

### **Ideas for Adding Whole Grains to Menus in Child Nutrition Programs:**

Whole grain ready-to-eat cereals	Whole grain crackers or cookies
Whole grain cooked breakfast cereals	Whole grain side dishes e.g., brown rice,
Granola made from whole grains	wild rice, cracked wheat, whole grain
Whole grain cereal or granola bars	bulgur or barley, whole specialty grains
Whole grain pancakes or waffles	Whole wheat pasta, such as macaroni,
Whole grain bagels or muffins	spaghetti, vermicelli or whole grain noodles
Whole wheat breads, rolls or buns	Whole grain salads (cracked wheat, whole
Other whole grain breads, rolls, or buns	grain bulgur, whole specialty grains)
Whole grain tortillas, taco shells	Other uses of whole grains (soups,
Whole grain chips/pretzels	casseroles, combination dishes)
Whole grain pita pockets	Soba noodles (with whole buckwheat flour as
Whole grain cornbread	primary ingredient)

## Attachment A: List of Common Whole Grains

While this list is extensive, it is NOT comprehensive and therefore may not contain all possible representations of whole grain ingredient names on food labels.

**WHEAT (RED)** – the most common kind of wheat in the U.S.

- wheat berries
- whole grain wheat
- cracked wheat or crushed wheat
- whole wheat flour
- bromated whole wheat flour
- stone ground whole wheat flour
- toasted crushed whole wheat
- whole wheat pastry flour
- graham flour
- entire wheat flour
- whole durum flour
- whole durum wheat flour
- whole wheat flakes
- sprouted wheat
- sprouted wheat berries
- bulgur (cracked wheat)
- whole bulgur
- whole grain bulgur

**WHEAT (WHITE)**

- whole white wheat
- whole white wheat flour

**OATS**

- whole oats
- oat groats
- oatmeal or rolled oats
- whole oat flour

**BARLEY**

- whole barley
- whole grain barley
- whole barley flakes
- whole barley flour
- whole grain barley flour
- dehulled barley
- dehulled barley flour

**CORN**

- whole corn
- whole corn flour
- whole grain corn flour
- whole grain cornmeal
- whole cornmeal
- whole grain grits

**BROWN RICE**

- brown rice
- brown rice flour

**WILD RICE**

- wild rice
- wild rice flour

**RYE**

- whole rye
- rye berries
- whole rye flour
- whole rye flakes

**LESS COMMON GRAINS:** to be whole grains, “whole” must be listed before the grain name.

- einkorn
- Kamut<sup>®</sup>
- emmer (farro)
- teff
- triticale
- spelt
- buckwheat
- amaranth
- sorghum (milo)
- millet
- quinoa

**Attachment B: Documentation for Foods Containing Multiple Whole Grains  
for the HealthierUS School Challenge**

Schools should provide this documentation on school letterhead for recipes. Manufacturers should provide this information on company letterhead for commercial products.

\*\*\*\*\*

School District's or Company's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Recipe/Product Name \_\_\_\_\_ Product Code (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

1. Attach copy of recipe or product ingredient statement.
2. **Highlight** or underline all items that are whole grains in the attached recipe or product ingredient statement.
3. Serving size according to the recipe \_\_\_\_\_ or in grams for product \_\_\_\_\_
4. Total weight of all whole grain ingredients in the recipe or product \_\_\_\_\_
5. Weight of primary ingredient in recipe or listed first in ingredient statement \_\_\_\_\_  
(To qualify for Group A: Weight of Item #4 is greater than Item #5.)
6. Weight of primary grain ingredient in recipe or listed first in ingredient statement \_\_\_\_\_  
(To qualify for Group B: Weight of Item #4 is greater than Item #6.)
7. School District or Company representative's signature that all information is accurate:

Printed Name	Signature	Title
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Email	Date	
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**For FNS/HUSSC evaluator:**

- A. Does the serving size for this food equal 1 G/B serving? (see Item #3) \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No
- B. Are all of the ingredients highlighted in Item #2 above, considered whole grains according to HUSSC criteria? \_\_\_\_\_ If not, ask for corrected information.
- C. Does weight of Item #4 exceed weight of Item #5? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No
- D. Does weight of Item #4 exceed weight of Item #6? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No
- E. Are answers to Items A, B, and C yes? \_\_\_\_ Yes, food product meets Group A.
- F. Are answers to Items A, B, and D yes? \_\_\_\_ Yes, food product meets Group B.



# Fact Sheet

## Serve More Whole Grains for Healthier School Meals

### KEY ISSUES:

- Whole grains contain fiber, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.
- Whole grains may reduce the risk of several chronic diseases including coronary heart disease, and may help maintain a healthy weight.
- The *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend we consume at least half of our grains as whole grains (3 or more ounce-equivalents per day).
- Offer one or more whole-grain products every day in your school meals.
- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has developed draft guidance on whole-grain label statements. At this time, foodservice personnel should still read the ingredient statement on grain products and choose those with whole grains as the first ingredient.

**A**lthough some students may not be familiar with the color, taste, and texture of whole grains and whole-grain products, they can enjoy these good-for-you foods if you gradually add them to your menus.

### Recognizing Whole Grains Is Easy!

Read the *ingredient statement* for the products you purchase. Manufacturers must list ingredients in descending order by weight. Look for products that list whole grains first. If your students aren't used to eating whole grains, start with products that list whole grains further down the list and make a plan to gradually offer more whole grains throughout the school year.

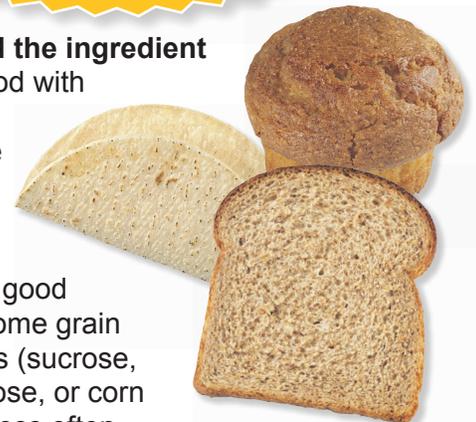
For many whole grains, the word "whole" usually is listed before the type of grain, such as "whole-wheat flour," "whole durum flour," "whole-grain barley," "whole cornmeal," or "whole white wheat." Other ways to identify whole grains are:

- Some whole grains have a *standard of identity* and do not include the word "whole," such as "cracked wheat," "crushed wheat," and "graham flour."
- The term "berries" or "groats" indicate a whole, unrefined grain – for example, rye berries or buckwheat groats.
- Rolled oats, oatmeal, brown rice, brown rice flour, and wild rice are also whole grains.

Easy ways to follow the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*

### Recipe for Success

- **Compare Nutrition Facts labels and the ingredient lists** for similar foods. Choose the food with whole grains as the first ingredient. Check the Nutrition Facts label for the lowest amount of *trans* fat, saturated fat, sugar, sodium, and cholesterol. Some manufacturers add whole grains to foods that otherwise are not good choices for students. For example, some grain products contain a lot of added sugars (sucrose, honey, high-fructose corn syrup, glucose, or corn sweetener). Choose these products less often.





## USDA Commodity Food Program

Schools can order brown rice, rolled oats, whole-wheat flour, whole-grain dry kernel corn (for processing), and whole-grain pastas (spaghetti and rotini) through the USDA Commodity Food Program. Check the list of available whole-grain items at: [www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/schcnp/](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/schcnp/).

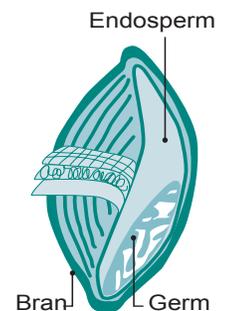
- **Introduce whole grains** in popular products like pizza crust, breads and rolls, hamburger buns, pasta, mixed dishes such as meatballs, and breakfast foods. For more variety, include some less common whole grains and offer different whole-grain products to your students.
- **Write specifications that clearly describe the product** you want to offer. If possible, buy products that contain whole grain as the primary ingredient by weight.
- **Modify recipes to add more whole grains.** For example, start with smaller amounts of whole-wheat flour (33 percent) in your favorite roll recipe and work up to at least 51 percent. Share your recipes with other schools to help them offer their students tasty, nutritious whole-grain products.
- **Continue to offer some enriched grain products**, which are fortified with folic acid, an important nutrient for our diets.
- **Suggest Food Service Management Companies use the above tips** when writing specifications, and preparing or selecting grain products for menus.

## Messages for Students

- Make half your grains whole!
- Try something new – whole-grain pasta or brown rice pilaf.
- Be “label able” – Look for whole grains in the ingredient statement and choose foods that list whole grains first.
- Choose a whole-grain cereal for breakfast!

## Did You Know?

**Whole Grains** consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel. The kernel has three parts—the bran, the germ, and the endosperm. Usually the kernel is cracked, crushed, or flaked during the milling process. If the finished product retains the same relative proportions of bran, germ, and endosperm as the original grain, it is considered a whole grain.



**Refined grains** are milled to remove part or all of the bran and/or germ. Most refined grains are “enriched” to add back some of the iron, thiamine, niacin, and riboflavin that were lost in the milling process. Enriched grains also have folic acid added to increase this important nutrient in our diets.

**Terms that indicate refined grains, not whole grains:** flour, enriched flour, wheat flour, bread flour, durum flour, grits, hominy, farina, semolina, cornmeal, degerminated cornmeal, corn flour, rice, rice flour, couscous, pearly barley, Scotch barley, pot barley.

## For more information:

[www.MyPyramid.gov](http://www.MyPyramid.gov)

[www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/flgragui.html](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/flgragui.html)

Contact the National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) at [www.nfsmi.org](http://www.nfsmi.org) or 1-800-321-3054, if you have questions about whole grains, need recipes or additional information.



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