

OVERVIEW OF TASTES AND PREFERENCES FOR WHOLE GRAINS

This report summarizes important points from the consumer taste and preference sessions at the Whole Grains Go Mainstream conference in New Orleans, LA, November 14-16, 2004.

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BUYING WHOLE GRAINS



New Whole Grains Council “Stamp” Program Helps You Easily Buy and Eat Whole Grains

The Whole Grains Council’s new “Whole Grain Stamp” program makes finding whole grain foods much easier. It features three different “stamps” which, with a quick glance, identify foods containing whole grains. The Stamps depict three levels of whole grain content:

- GOOD Source** food contains a minimum of 8 grams of whole grains
- EXCELLENT Source** food contains a minimum of 16 grams of whole grains
- 100% Whole Grain** all grains in the food are whole grains AND the food contains a minimum of 16 grams of whole grains

Scientists agree that the health benefits of whole grains seem to “kick in” at three servings per day. They define a serving of whole grains as 16 grams of whole grain ingredients. Thus, the goal is to eat a minimum of 48 grams (16 grams x 3 servings) of whole grains each day.

The Whole Grain Stamps make this easy. You can be sure you’re getting the whole grains you need if you eat

- 6 foods with the Good Source stamp, or
- 3 foods with the Excellent Source stamp or 100% stamp

The Whole Grain Stamp will be phased in during 2005, as manufacturers print new packaging. The Whole Grains Council will carry out an education campaign to familiarize consumers with the Stamp, as foods bearing it reach the shelves.

CHECKING INGREDIENTS

On products without the Whole Grain Stamp, you can read the ingredients label to see if they're really made of whole grains. Some manufacturers add caramel coloring and use wording that makes a product seem whole grain when it isn't.

Words you may see on packages	What they mean
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whole grain • whole wheat • whole [other grain] • stoneground whole [grain] 	<p><i>Grain is as intact as possible, so you're getting all the nutrients of the whole grain.</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unbleached flour • wheat flour • semolina • durum wheat • 100% pure durum semolina • organic unbleached flour • enriched flour • multigrain** • degerminated (on corn meal) 	<p><i>These words are accurate descriptions of the package contents, but because the word "whole" is missing, you are missing the benefits of "whole grains."</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • partially hydrogenated oil (such as soy, corn, safflower, peanut, sunflower, canola, cottonseed and other oils) 	<p><i>These "trans fats" will be less common by January 2006, when they must be included on product labels. Until then, avoid them when possible, as trans fats are harmful to health</i></p>

*** Multigrain can describe several different refined grains, several whole grains, or a mix of both.*

Nutrition Facts. The Nutrient Facts label shows the details of the contents of a specified "serving," and a quick scan of it tells valuable information about the product. Depending upon the grains it's made from, a serving of whole grain cereal, bread, rolls, grain, crackers, etc. usually has about 3 to 4 grams of protein and 3 grams of fiber. These amounts make these foods good sources of these important ingredients of healthy eating patterns.



BASICS FOR COOKING WHOLE GRAINS

Whole grains are available in many commercial food products, so you can add whole grains easily to every meal without cooking them from scratch yourself. If you'd like to enjoy delicious whole grains at home as a side dish, however, here are some guidelines for cooking them.

Plain grains, general directions: Cooking most grains is similar to cooking rice. You put the dry grain in a pan with water or broth, bring to a boil, then simmer until the liquid is absorbed. Don't be intimidated!

Grain Pilaf, general directions: Brown small bits of onion, mushroom, and garlic in a little oil in a large saucepan. Add grain and cook briefly, coating the grains in the oil. Then add broth in the amount specified below, and cook until all liquid is absorbed.

Whole Grain	For 1 cup dry grain, use...	Simmer time, after bringing to boil	Amount after cooking
Amaranth	2 cups liquid	20-25 min.	3 1/2 cups
Barley, pearl	3 cups liquid	45 min.	3 1/2 cups
Buckwheat	2 cups liquid	20 min.	4 cups
Bulgur	2 cups liquid	10-12 min.	3 cups
Cornmeal (polenta)	4 cups liquid	25-30 min.	2 1/2 cups
Couscous, whole wheat	2 cups liquid	10 min. (heat off)	3 cups
Grano	6 cups liquid	30-35 min.	3 cups
Kamut® grain	4 cups liquid	Soak overnight then cook 45-60 min.	3 cups
Millet (hulled)	2 1/2 cups liquid	25-35 min.	4 cups
Oats, steel-cut	4 cups liquid	20 min.	4 cups
Pasta, whole wheat	6 cups liquid	8-12 min. (varies by size/shape)	varies
Quinoa	2 cups liquid	12-15 min.	3+ cups
Rice, brown	2 1/2 cups liquid	25-45 min. (varies by brand)	3-4 cups
Rye	4 cups liquid	Soak overnight then cook 45-60 min.	3 cups
Sorghum	2-3 cups liquid	25-40 min.	3 cups
Spelt berries	4 cups liquid	Soak overnight then cook 45-60 min.	3 cups
Wheat berries	4 cups liquid	Soak overnight then cook 45-60 min.	3 cups
Wild rice	3 cups liquid	45-55 min.	3 1/2 cups

TIPS FOR COOKING WHOLE GRAINS

- **Grano and Pasta.** Most grains are cooked in a specified amount of water or broth until all the liquid is absorbed. However, grano is usually cooked in excess amounts of water for a specified time, and then the excess water is drained – in the same manner that pasta is cooked.
- **Cooking Times** are approximate, and will vary according to grain variety and time since harvest (a measure of dryness). When you think they're tender and tasty, they're done.
- **Big Batches.** Make whole grains in big batches (especially those like pearl barley or brown rice that take 40-45 minutes to cook). They keep 3-4 days in your refrigerator and take just minutes to warm up in a little broth (microwave or stove top). Cook a big batch at the beginning of the week, then use it day by day.
- **Leftovers.** Leftover cold rice makes terrific fried rice. Chop some vegetables and sauté with olive oil or canola oil in a non-stick pan. Add some meat or fish (for example, leftover chicken, a few frozen shrimp, or even a scrambled egg). Add the rice, sprinkle with soy sauce, and stir gently until everything is cooked. Other leftover grains can be added to soups, or made into quick salads by adding chopped vegetables (cooked or raw) and a little dressing.
- **Not Much Time To Cook?** Whole wheat couscous and bulgur are as quick as white rice.
- **Let It Sit.** Bulgur can be cooked “actively” by simmering for about 10-12 minutes. You can also cook it like couscous: bring bulgur and liquid to a boil, then turn off the stove and let it sit about 25 minutes – or longer – while you cook everything else. This is a very handy technique when you're cooking other dishes and want everything done and ready at the same time.
- **Broth.** Except at breakfast, consider cooking all grains in broth for added flavor. A bouillon paste called “Better Than Bouillon” is sold in the soup section of most supermarkets. If you use a half teaspoon of this paste for each cup of water, your grains will gain in flavor without too much added sodium. Better Than Bouillon comes in several broth flavors, including chicken, vegetable, beef, fish, and mushroom.
- **Sticky Bottoms.** If whole grains are sticking to the bottom of the pan, turn off the heat, add a very small amount of liquid, cover with a lid, and let the pan sit a few minutes. The grain will loosen, making serving and cleanup easier.

START THE WHOLE GRAINS JOURNEY WITH BABY STEPS

Eating more wisely isn't an all-or-nothing proposition. Remember your goal is to make *half* your grains whole grains – not to go cold turkey on refined grains. Because it will probably take a month or two to reach this goal, it's comforting and supporting to remind yourself that any increase in whole grains benefits you and your family's health. Almost everyone finds that once they take the first baby steps and get friendly with buying and cooking whole grains, it's easy to keep moving towards the goal.

Here is a checklist of suggestions for adding more whole grains to every meal:

- I'll buy three different loaves of whole-grain bread, and taste all of them all as toast and sandwiches, to find my favorite.
- I'll buy some whole-wheat pasta and try it with my favorite sauce.
- I'll serve bulgur instead of french fries with dinner one night this month.
- I'll try a whole grains breakfast cereal with at least 3 grams of fiber per serving.
- I'll visit the Health Food Store (or Health Food section of my market) and look over all the different whole grains in bins.
- On the weekend, I'll try cooking a pot of steel-cut oatmeal for breakfast.
- I'll make pizza for the kids and use whole wheat pita for the crust.
- I'll experiment with our favorite cookie recipes, trying whole wheat flour next time, or maybe half whole wheat and half white wheat flour.
- I'll switch to whole grain crackers like Triscuits.
- I'll mix the kids' favorite refined cereal half and half with a healthier choice similar in size and shape. (Cinnamon Toast Crunch with Wheat Chex; Fruit Loops with Cheerios; etc.)
- I'll serve our hamburgers with whole wheat buns this week.

Eating Whole Grains

Most whole grains are chewier than refined grains, and they have a nuttier flavor. You and your family may find this unfamiliar at first. Most people find that after a month or two, family members welcome the tastes and textures of whole grains and find they add variety to grain options.

Changing a lifetime of tastes and habits takes time, so take it step by step, and pat yourself and your family on the back for every step you take towards the goal of whole grains at every meal.

It's really all about finding a comfortable balance between whole grains and refined grains, in the context of finding balances with so much of the rest of a healthy life – time for exercise, homework, TV, email, friends, and of course, work.

SIX STAGES OF CHANGE

Long-held habits aren't easily dislodged and replaced by healthier ones. Dr. James Prochaska is recognized as a leading expert on implementing dietary and other behavior changes. His experience in designing successful health intervention programs is based on this theory that we all move through six stages of change:

Stage 1: Precontemplation

Precontemplators have not yet decided to make a change. They are likely in denial that any change is needed; they may tell themselves, "My diet's fine the way it is. I'm healthy as a horse." They benefit from information that helps them realize that change is necessary.

Stage 2: Contemplation

Contemplators are seriously considering change, but are not yet ready to take action. This stage can last weeks, months or years, during which we say, "I know I should eat better, but..." People in this stage benefit from facing up to obstacles that keep them from changing.

Stage 3: Preparation

You're ready to set specific goals, which may be similar to those on our Babysteps Checklist. What will you do first, and when? What milestones will help you feel successful? This is the time to be honest with ourselves when we say, "Starting next week, I'll eat a bowl of whole grain cereal three mornings a week."

Stage 4: Action

Buy that cereal. Try a different bread. Reward yourself with a movie if you stick with your plan for three weeks. If you slip back into your old habits, just start again.

Stage 5: Maintenance

Six months have passed and you've worked up to eating whole grains at every meal. You've found many favorite new foods you look forward to eating, and your doctor reports you've lost five pounds and lowered your cholesterol. Success reinforces you.

Stage 6: Termination

Your new habits are now long-held and are just as hard to break as the old ones!

