Colorado State University Extension

Nutrition News

Information for Senior Citizens

Developed by Colorado State University Extension
Department of Food Science & Human Nutrition

A Closer Look at MyPyramid: Grains

At a first glance, MyPyramid seems to be a simple picture with colored bands that illustrate the different food groups. However, there is more than meets the eye. The pyramid shape was first introduced in 1992. It was redesigned in 2005 and a new MyPyramid was released.

This newsletter is one in a series that will focus on the individual food groups of MyPyramid. The purpose of this issue of *Nutrition News* is to take a closer look at the grains food group.

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Top Five Reasons to Have a Diet Rich in Grains

1. Packed with nutrition

These foods provide complex carbohydrates, vitamins (including vitamins B6, folate, riboflavin, thiamin, and niacin) and minerals (including iron, magnesium, and phosphorus).

2. Low in fat

Most foods from this group are low in fat. It's what you add to these foods such as butter and margarine that increase the fat content.

3. A good source of fiber

Whole wheat grain products such as whole wheat bread, whole grain rye crackers, bran muffins, oatmeal, and brown rice are good sources of fiber. It is recommended that you get between 25 and 35 grams of fiber a day, along with plenty of water. Consuming at least three servings of whole grains each day will help you meet these recommendations.

Food	Fiber (g)
1 piece whole wheat bread	3
bran muffin	2
½ cup oatmeal	4
1/3 cup All-Bran	8
1 cup popcorn	1-2
½ cup brown rice, cooked	2
2 graham crackers	1-2
1 small corn tortilla	1

4. Fills you up

A diet rich in grains doesn't leave much room for foods high in fat and simple sugars. If you fill up on grain products, you will be less tempted to eat cookies, cakes, and other sweets.

5. Tastes great!

How Many Servings of Grains Do You Need Each Day?

Approximately 6 ounce equivalents. This might seem like a lot of food, but because the serving sizes are small it is easy to get the amount that you need

One serving equals:

- 1 slice of bread
- 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal
- 1/2 cup cooked cereal, rice or pasta

Getting the Most "Goodies" from the Grains You Eat

To get the most nutrition from this group, choose foods made from whole grains, such as whole-wheat bread and whole-grain cereals. Buy foods that are "enriched" or "fortified." Nutrients are lost during the processing stages. When you see the word "whole-wheat" or "whole-grain," that means the entire grain (the bran, endosperm and germ) was used. Often times, food companies remove the bran, removing some nutrients as well.

Food Stamps:

To find out if you or someone you know qualifies for food stamps, call 1-800-221-5689.

"Enriched" versus "Fortified"

"Enriched" foods (e.g. enriched bread) are foods in which nutrients such as thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, folic acid and iron have been added. These nutrients are often lost in the milling process, and therefore, food companies add them to replace some of those losses. Enriched foods are not nutritionally equivalent to whole-grain foods.

Folic acid has been shown to prevent birth defects and reduce homocysteine levels linked to heart disease. It is now required that folic acid be added to grains during the milling process.

"Fortified" foods (e.g. fortified cereals) have nutrients added to restore nutrients lost in processing and to add nutrients that were not originally present. Examples of fortified foods are milk, which has vitamins A and D added to it, and salt to which iodine is added.

Grain Terms

Bran: outer part of a grain that is often removed, contains fiber (e.g. removed to make white flour)

Endosperm: largest part of a grain, the starchy part

Germ: inner part of a grain, the part that is nutrient rich

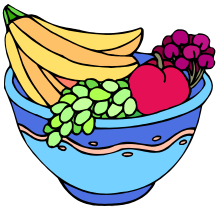
Did you know . . .

☞ **There are several thousand varieties of wheat. It is the most widely cultivated plant on earth.**

Questions and Answers

Q: What are carbohydrates?

A: Carbohydrate is one of the three sources of energy in your diet (the other two are protein and fat). The most common carbohydrates are sugars and starches. Starches (called complex carbohydrates) are found in grain products and in certain vegetables (e.g. baked beans, corn, peas, and potato). Sugars (called simple carbohydrates) are found naturally in foods such as milk and fruits. We can add sugars such as table sugar and honey to add taste, but go easy!



Q: What are the differences between cereals and grains.

A: Cereals are grains. More specifically, cereal grains are seeds of the grass family. Some common cereal grains are wheat, corn, rice, oats, rye, barley, triticale, and buckwheat. When we talk about the "bread, cereal, rice, and pasta" group, we are really talking about foods made from cereal grains.

Food for Thought

Rice is one of the most used of all the cereal grains. Rice is available as white polished rice, which is basically the endosperm (the bran and germ parts have been removed). Rice may also be enriched--a powdery material is applied to the surface. It is important that the rice not be washed before cooking to avoid loss of the nutrients. Brown rice has only the outer husk removed. One cup of uncooked rice yields about two to three cups of cooked rice. Wild rice is not a true rice; it comes from a reed-like water plant. It is prized for its nutty flavor. Combine different types of rice for added interest and appeal.

Watching Fat?

Try the easy substitutions below to decrease the fat in your diet.

Instead of . . .	Try this . . .
croissant	soft roll
taco shell	corn tortilla
doughnut	bagel
snack crackers	plain crackers
cookies	rice cakes
Danish pastry	English muffin
biscuit & gravy	cereal, skim milk

Tips for Storing Bread

Want to keep bread fresher? Try keeping your bread in a breadbox. Bread should be kept in a cool, dry place and in an airtight bag to prevent mold growth. Refrigerating the bread increases the bread's shelf life, but causes the bread to become hard. For long-term storage, freeze the bread. Bread freezes well. Keep moisture at a minimum by keeping the bread well wrapped.

Perfectly Pasta

Ingredients:
1 cup linguini, uncooked
2 green or red peppers, cut into strips
1/2 small bag frozen peas
2 carrots, peeled and sliced
1/2 cup Italian dressing (or low-fat Italian dressing)
Garlic and oregano to taste
Black olives (optional)

Directions:
1. Cook and drain pasta.
2. Sauté the peppers, peas, and carrots.
3. In a separate dish, mix salad dressing, pasta, and vegetables together with a pinch of garlic and oregano.

Serves 2-3.

Simply Fried Rice

Ingredients:
1 cup leftover rice
1/2 onion, chopped fine
1 small carrot, chopped fine
1/4 cup frozen peas
2 stalks green onion, sliced
1 tsp soy sauce
1 tsp oil
Black pepper to taste (optional)

Directions:
1. Sauté onion in oil. Add carrots and peas and cook for 1 minute.
2. Add rice, green onion, soy sauce, and black pepper.

Hint: Cold, leftover rice works best.

Basic Bulgur Pilaf

Bulgur is a wheat product that is pre-cooked. It is often found in the gourmet food sections.

Ingredients:
1 small onion, minced
2 tsp margarine
1 cup bulgur
2 cups boiling broth*
black pepper

Directions:
1. Sauté onion in margarine until clear.
2. Stir in bulgur and cook for 1 to 2 minutes.
3. Add broth and pepper and stir well.
4. Cover pan, reduce heat to low, and simmer for 15 minutes or until all the liquid is gone.

Serves 2-3.

*To reduce salt, add 1 cup of water to 1 cup of broth to equal 2 cups of diluted broth.