

# The Word on Whole Grain

For years, nutrition experts have said that whole grains are good for us and that at least half of the grains in our diet should be whole grains. That means that children younger than age 8, who eat about 3-5 ounces of grains each day, need to get 1 ½ to 2 ½ ounces from whole grains.

## What are whole grains?

Whole grains include corn, oats, rice, rye, and whole wheat. There are also a variety of lesser known whole grains such as millet, quinoa, buckwheat, spelt, einkorn, teff, sorghum, triticale, and amaranth.

## What is the difference between whole grain and refined grain?

Whole grain is harvested and the entire kernel is ground into flour, flattened into a cereal (like rolled oats), or chopped into pieces. Refined grain splits the grain, removing the outside fibrous bran coating and the central healthy fat-containing germ. The result is a light-colored flour that, when baked, creates light textured baked goods. However, when the grain is refined, many of the vitamins and minerals are lost in the process which results in a less nutritious food than the original whole grain.

## Why are whole grains important?

Whole grains are an important source of vitamins and minerals. The nutrients found in whole grains include: vitamin E, vitamin B6, magnesium, manganese, zinc, potassium, copper, and pantothenic acid. Whole grains are also the top source for fiber and dietary fiber, which reduces the risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Fiber helps the digestive system which is a benefit to those who struggle with constipation or irregular stools; often common in younger children.

## Why increase the whole grains in the meals and snacks we eat?

Multiple studies have shown that people who eat 1-4 servings daily decrease the risk of heart disease and stroke by 25%. Whole grains also play an important role in positively impacting our health by:

- Lowering the risk of heart disease,
- Lowering cholesterol levels,
- Regulating insulin levels and managing diabetes,
- Providing healthy antioxidants to combat cancer,
- Improving bowel function and preventing colon cancer, and
- Preventing obesity and aiding with weight management.

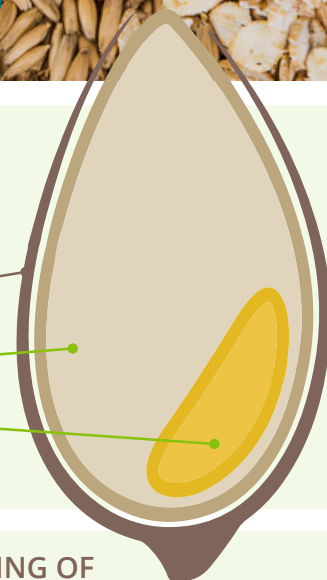
## Whole Grain

contains all parts of the grain kernel which includes the bran, germ and endosperm.

**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



# ONE

**SERVING OF GRAINS** each day must contain a whole grain-rich component for child and adult meal patterns.



## Whole Grain-Rich

are foods that contain at least **50%** whole grains and the remaining grains are enriched, or are **100%** whole grain.

## CACFP Need to Know

- ◆ One whole grain-rich food must be served by the home or center each day regardless of which children participate in that meal.
- ◆ If your site serves snacks only and the snack does not include a grain, the WGR requirement does not apply. If you do serve a grain, it must be whole grain-rich.
- ◆ Grain portions served must meet the minimum serving size for the age group to satisfy the whole grain-rich requirement.



## Whole Grain

cereals which are fortified with vitamins and minerals are whole grain-rich. They must also meet the sugar limit requirements to be #cacfpcreditable.



## What are we doing about it?

The US Department of Agriculture Food & Nutrition Service (FNS) now requires that CACFP meal patterns include whole grains and that providers who serve grains offer a whole grain-rich component at least once a day. The term whole grain-rich (verses whole grain) can be confusing and many product packaging labels can add to that confusion as well.

## How to identify whole grain-rich?

There are several methods for identifying if a product is whole grain-rich. These include breads and macaroni labeled “whole wheat”; products found on any state agency WIC list or which have an FDA whole grain health claim on their packaging; foods that meet the Rule of Three or meet the whole grain-rich criteria under NSLP; recipes with proper manufacturers' documentation or which are standardized and can demonstrate that whole grains are the primary grain ingredient by weight; and cereals which have a whole grain as the first ingredient and are fortified with vitamins and minerals.

## Easy Ways to Include Whole Grain-Rich

- ✓ Whole wheat bread for sandwiches or toast, whole grain-rich tortillas for quesadillas or wraps
- ✓ Ready-to-eat whole grain, fortified cereals
- ✓ Brown or wild rice, oatmeal, whole wheat spaghetti
- ✓ Pancakes, waffles, or muffins made with at least 50% whole grain flour and remaining grains are enriched
- ✓ Whole grain-rich crackers, pretzels, pita wedges

## Check the Ingredients List

Manufacturers and advertisers are experts at making food sound appealing. Statements on the packaging can sometimes mislead consumers into believing they are getting a product high in whole grain when they may not be. Beware of terms like “good source,” “hearty grains,” “whole grain blend,” “multi-grain,” “made with whole wheat,” and “contains whole grains.”

# Identifying Whole Grain-Rich Resources

En Español

Handy One Page Quick Reference Sheet



Full Eight Page Reference Guide Booklet



Available at [cacfp.org/childnutritiontoday](http://cacfp.org/childnutritiontoday)



## Banana Sushi Roll

### Directions

Have a pair of children work together to make this fun snack. Give each twosome a tortilla with the peanut butter and let them spread it using the back of a spoon. Place peeled banana at one end and roll it up. Slice into 8 pieces.

### Ingredients

- 100% whole wheat flour tortilla, small
- 1 large banana
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter



Snack Crediting: 2 Servings for ages 1-2 & 3-5