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Why Settle for Half When You Can Have the Whole, Whole Grain That is!

By Sheila Gains, Family & Consumer Science Extension Agent, Arapahoe County

Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley, or any other cereal grain is a grain product. Bread, pasta, noodles, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas and grits are examples of grain products. These products can be made from whole grains or refined grains.

Whole grains might be an actual whole kernel or a flour made by grinding up the whole kernel. The whole kernel including the bran, germ and endosperm make whole grain flours. The products made with them are a healthier choice than food made with refined flours. Refined flours are made by grinding only the endosperm part of the grain. Whole grain foods are higher in fiber, which helps you feel full, slows digestion of carbohydrates, can lower cholesterol levels and reduces the risk of constipation.



Make half your grains whole!

Tips for Success:

- Next time you make a sandwich, make it with whole wheat bread.
- Try cooking and serving brown rice instead of white rice. Or serve half brown and half white. Plan ahead because brown rice takes longer to cook.
- Whole wheat tortillas may look strange on your plate but they are very tasty wrapped around your favorite filling.
- Whole grains like popcorn can be a healthy snack, just watch how much butter and salt are added to keep it a healthy choice.
- Try cooking bulgur, barley, or quinoa grains, and add them to a favorite soup or casserole dish.
- Whole grain pastas have really improved in the last few years. They are no longer mushy or strong flavored. So, if it's been awhile since you tried cooking up a pot of whole grain pasta try it again, it's really good.
- When making your favorite recipe for banana or pumpkin bread this fall try substituting half of the all purpose flour with whole wheat flour. Then do the same with other recipes that call for flour.
- Read the label. Read the ingredients list and choose foods that name a whole-grain ingredient first on the list. Look for "whole wheat", "brown rice", "bulgur", "buckwheat", "oatmeal", "whole grain cornmeal", "whole oats", "whole rye" or "wild rice".
- Don't be fooled by the color of foods. A brown colored bread does not mean it is whole wheat. Even foods labeled "multi grain", "stone ground", "100 % wheat", "cracked wheat", "seven grain", or "bran" are not usually 100% whole grain products, in fact they may not contain any whole grain.

Let's Talk:

Children often reject whole grain foods because the color is darker, the texture might be different and flavor is stronger than what they are used to. To help children make a transition to more whole grains, substitute $\frac{1}{4}$ of the white flour in recipes with whole wheat flour. Make a goal of gradually getting to at least $\frac{1}{2}$ of the flour whole wheat within the next few months. If your store has white whole wheat flour, give it a try. Many people can't tell much difference in taste, color or texture compared to all purpose flour.

Look for breakfast cereals, breads and other products made with white whole wheat flour. White whole wheat flour is milder in taste and lighter in color. But check the label to be sure white whole wheat flour is the first ingredient on the list. Let children know that eating more whole grain products is one way your family is going to take charge of their health. Ask school age children to help you be a food detective, by helping you read the label and find foods made with whole grains.

Recipe for Health:

Pumpkin Muffins

Ingredients:

*1 cup whole wheat flour or white whole wheat flour
1 cup all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
3/4 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
1 cup canned pumpkin
1/2 cup brown sugar packed
1/3 cup low fat milk
1/4 cup vegetable oil
1 large egg
1/2 cup raisins, optional*



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Spray muffin pan cups or use paper liners.
3. In a large bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt and pie spice. In another bowl, whisk pumpkin, sugar, milk, oil, and egg until smooth. Add raisins.
4. Stir pumpkin mixture into dry ingredients just until combined.
5. Spoon into prepared pans and bake 20 minutes or until done.
6. Remove from pan and cool on wire rack.