

Smart Choices

Nutrition News

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Whole Grains for Better Health

The Grain Group is an important part of MyPyramid from USDA. This food group includes wheat, rice, oats, corn, barley and rye.

Most adults should aim for 6 ounces from the Grain Group every day. That is easy to do, because a serving size is actually small. One ounce equals one slice of bread, one cup of breakfast cereal or 1/2 cup of cooked rice, cereal or pasta.



Do you know the difference between refined grains and whole grains? Most of us eat largely refined-grain foods such as white bread, white rice, crackers, bagels and pretzels. However, whole-grain foods such as whole-wheat bread, oatmeal, brown

rice and popcorn provide better health benefits.

That is why MyPyramid encourages us to make half of our grains whole. This means we should eat at least three ounces of whole grain foods every day.

Unlike refined grains, whole grains retain the highly nutritious bran layer and germ. These are lost during the milling process to create refined grains. The bran and germ contain most of the grain's beneficial fiber, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Antioxidants are compounds that help to slow down the aging process and may lower the risk of many diseases. Recent research suggests that whole grains can lower the risk of heart disease, stroke, colon cancer and diabetes.

You can make economical choices and still get whole grain foods. Oatmeal in large canisters is one of the lowest priced whole grains. Also, look for store-brand shredded wheat, raisin bran and bran flakes. Store brand whole-wheat bread often

costs about the same as white breads. However, many "wheat" breads are made mainly with refined white flour with added coloring from caramel or molasses. Check for whole-wheat on the label rather than just "wheat". True whole-grain foods have about 3 grams of fiber per 100 calories or about 2 to 3 grams per slice of bread. Check the Nutrition Facts label on the package to see how much fiber is in the food before you buy.



In this Issue:

- ◆ Whole Grains for Better Health
- ◆ Hearty Recipes
- ◆ Stretching Food Budgets: Food Stamps
- ◆ Food Safety

What's the Purpose of Food Stamps?



The Food Stamp Program isn't about welfare. Its goal is helping people with limited incomes improve their nutrition for better health and disease prevention. The program is available to all eligible persons.

Food stamp coupons have been replaced by an electronic card that looks and works just like a typical debit or credit card used by any grocery shopper. No one but you and the grocery check-out clerk will know you are using food stamps. The Food Stamp Program can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact 1-888-LAHELPU or visit www.dss.state.la.us.

A to Z Oat Bran Muffins

1 1/4 cups all-purpose flour	1/2 cup oat bran
2 teaspoons baking powder	1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon cinnamon	1/3 cup packed brown sugar
1/4 cup canola oil	1 egg
1 tart cooking apple, such as Granny Smith, peeled and shredded	1 medium grated zucchini



1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Grease a 12-count muffin tin or line it with paper baking cups.
2. In a medium bowl, combine the flour, oat bran, baking powder, baking soda and cinnamon.
3. In a large bowl, combine the brown sugar, oil and egg. Whisk until well blended. Stir in the apple and zucchini. Add all at once to the dry ingredients. Stir only until moistened; the batter should be slightly lumpy.
4. Spoon the batter evenly into the prepared pan. Bake 20 to 25 minutes, or until the muffins are golden and springy to the touch. Remove the muffins from the pan and let cool on a wire rack. Makes 12 muffins.

Per Muffin—Calories: 134; Total fat: 5.4 g; Saturated fat: 0.6 g; Cholesterol: 17 mg; Sodium: 142 mg; Fiber: 1.3 g; Carbohydrates: 21 g

Oatmeal Applesauce Cookies



1/2 cup flour	1/4 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon baking powder	1 egg white
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice	1 cup rolled oats, quick cooking
1/8 teaspoon salt	1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
1/4 cup margarine	1/4 cup chopped raisins

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Grease baking sheet.
2. Mix flour, baking powder, allspice and salt.
3. Beat margarine and sugar until creamy. Add egg whites; beat well.
4. Add dry ingredients. Stir in oats, applesauce and raisins. Mix well.
5. Drop by rounded tablespoon onto baking sheet. Bake 11 minutes or until edges are lightly browned. Cool. Makes about 2 1/2 dozen cookies.

Per Cookie—Calories: 45; Total fat: 2 g; Saturated fat: trace; Cholesterol: 0; Sodium: 35 mg; Fiber: 0.5 g

Keep It Safe

After food shopping, bring food home as soon as you can, especially if the weather is warm. Fresh food can spoil quickly and lose quality in a warm vehicle. Foods that are most likely to spoil and cause illness are milk and dairy products, eggs, meat, poultry and seafood. Refrigerate them as soon as possible. Be sure to store frozen foods in the freezer compartment of your refrigerator.

Defrost frozen foods in your refrigerator—especially protein foods like ground beef, chicken and fish. Foods defrosted at room temperature can spoil easily.

Provided by LSU AgCenter Community Nutrition Programs

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Issued in Furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with USDA. The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. This material was funded partially by USDA's Food Stamp Program. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet.

To find out how to apply, call 1-888-LAHELPU or visit: www.dss.state.la.us to download an application for Food Stamps