

# Go For Whole Grains

## Whole Grain Pledge #2:

This month, I WILL:

- ✓ Complete one of the two activities in this month's toolkit, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, with my child/ren.
- ✓ Help my child prepare this month's recipe, Whole-Grain Fruit Bars.
- ✓ Cook a new whole grain one night each week.
- ✓ Try to make 50%-75% half (or more) of your grains whole grains.
- ✓ Incorporate different colored whole grains into our daily meals and snacks.
- ✓ Tell each other what our favorite whole grain is – and give two reasons why.



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All grains start as whole grains – meaning the three layers: the bran, endosperm and germ are all intact. A grain is no longer whole when the bran and germ are removed in processing. By removing layers of the grain, valuable nutrients – like fiber, vitamins and phytochemicals – are lost.

Your second *Healthy Kids Today – Prevent Cancer Tomorrow* toolkit focuses on whole grains and how they lower our cancer risk and give us long lasting energy while making our meals delicious!

## What is a whole grain?

**Whole grains** contain all three parts of the plant kernel – the outer layer of bran, the inner germ of the plant and the largest part of the kernel, called the endosperm.

The bran and germ are the most nutritious parts of the grain. The bran provides fiber, B vitamins, iron and antioxidants, and the germ offers B vitamins, minerals and healthy fats. The endosperm contains carbohydrates, which supply the growing plant with energy.



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**Refined grains** are stripped of the nutritious bran and germ during milling, leaving behind the carbohydrate-rich endosperm. White flour and white rice are examples of refined grains.

**Enriched grains** are refined grains that have had some of the B vitamins and iron that are lost during refinement, added back in. Food companies are not required by the USDA to add fiber back in to enriched grains.

## What Health Benefits Do You Get from Eating Whole Grains?

- **Fuel for the brain:** Whole grains help keep our brains nourished throughout the day by keeping our blood glucose levels steady. Refined grains or simple sugars, such as white bread or sugary food, digest quickly and can lead to an energy spike. After the initial energy spike you may crash, feel tired or irritable and be unable to focus.
- **Fiber:** Eating fiber-rich whole grains helps protect against colon cancer and promotes weight control.

Whole grains are digested more slowly than refined grains, keeping blood sugar levels normal to prevent diabetes. They also keep us feeling fuller for longer, which prevents weight gain. Overweight and obesity have been specifically linked to higher cancer risk.

- **Vitamins and minerals:** In whole grains, most of the vitamins and minerals are found in the germ. The germ is removed during the refining process. Some products are enriched with some of the vitamins and minerals but not to the extent that the product had in its natural whole-grain form.

Examples of minerals that are found in whole grain products include calcium, magnesium and potassium.

- **Heart health:** Eating 3 servings of whole grains a day significantly cuts the risk of heart disease and stroke. Whole grains help reduce total cholesterol, weight and high blood pressure, three risk factors for heart attack.

## Which Grains Are Whole Grains?

Look for these whole-grain products at your local supermarket or health food store. Be adventurous and try some types that are unfamiliar to you. If your local stores don't carry the product you want, ask the store manager to order it. Whole grains can be served as cooked breakfast cereals, salad ingredients, pilafs, stuffings and in meatballs or meatloaf.

- Barley
- Brown rice (quick-cooking versions take only 10-15 minutes)
- Buckwheat (kasha)
- Bulgur (used in tabouli mix)



- Millet
- Oats/Oatmeal
- Popcorn
- Quinoa
- Spelt



- Wheat berries
- Whole-wheat bread, pasta and tortillas
- Whole-wheat flour (or pastry flour to make finer-textured baked goods)
- Stone-ground whole-grain cornmeal





## Be a Food Label Detective: Make Sure It's a Whole Grain

Look for "100% **Whole** Grain" or "100% **Whole** Wheat" on the packages of foods like bread, cereal, tortillas and pasta. Or check the ingredient list. If the word "whole" is listed before the first ingredient, that food is made with whole grains. (Oats and oatmeal don't need to say "whole," although "oatmeal bread" is almost always made from refined wheat flour with small amounts of oats.)

### How Much Is a Serving?

One serving of whole grains is:

- ½ cup cooked whole grain, such as brown or wild rice or whole-wheat pasta
- 1 slice 100% whole-grain bread
- ¾–1 cup 100% whole-grain ready-to-eat cereal
- ½ cup cooked hot cereal, such as oatmeal

**Other label terms may make a product sound like it's made from whole grains when it is not.** "Multi-grain," "seven-grain" and "unbleached wheat flour" are marketing terms and do not mean the product is made from whole grains. A product labeled "made with whole grains" may also contain refined grains. Look for the Whole Grains Council Stamps to ensure that a product contains whole grains.



**Color and texture.** Brown-colored bread is often refined white bread with added caramel coloring or molasses to make it look like whole-wheat bread. A rough-textured darker bread, like rye or pumpernickel, may be made from refined wheat. Look for "whole rye," "whole-grain pumpernickel" or "whole wheat" in the ingredient list. If the first ingredient is "wheat flour," that means it's refined.

## How to Get Your Children to Eat More Whole Grains

Here are a few tips to incorporate fiber-rich whole grains into you and your family's diet:

- **Start them young.** It's easier to get your kids in the habit of eating and enjoying whole grains if you start when they are young. Try topping their favorite yogurt with oatmeal or crushed whole-grain cereal.
- **Start your day the whole-grain way.** Try whole-wheat or whole-grain toast with a low-fat cream cheese or peanut butter.
- **Incorporate them in dishes you already love.** Try whole-wheat pizza crust with your favorite toppings, brown rice pasta with a tomato based sauce, and whole-grain tortillas for delicious tacos, burritos or quesadillas.
- **Enjoy whole grains as a part of tasty snacks.** Dip whole-grain pita chips in hummus or pop fresh popcorn and add cinnamon!

"Check out this month's activities: our Kid Power Recipe for Whole-Grain Fruit Bars, Whole Grain-Tracker Activity and Go For Whole Grains Lesson Plan."

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Visit [www.superkidsnutrition.com](http://www.superkidsnutrition.com) for more fun activities with the Super Crew.

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