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Grain Group: Make Half Your Grains Whole

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A large amount of our daily calories should come from healthy grain products.

- Grains provide energy, vitamins, fiber, and small amounts of iron and protein.
- Most grain products are low in fat and calories.
- Grains can be low in cost and help to stretch your food budget.

Keep your body healthy. Find the amount of grain products you need each day by visiting <http://www.MyPyramid.gov> or by completing MyPyramid Worksheet (NEP-201C).

**Serving It Up**
1-ounce equivalent is:
- 1 slice of bread
- ½ hamburger bun or hotdog bun
- 1 small roll or biscuit
- 1 tortilla, 6 to 8 inches
- ½ cup cooked cereal, rice, or pasta
- 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal
- 1 small waffle or pancake
- 5 to 6 saltine crackers
- 3 cups plain popcorn

**Grain for Grain**
Grains provide a number of nutrients, such as:
- Carbohydrates for energy.
- Protein for growth and repair.
- Iron for healthy blood and muscles.
- B vitamins for healthy skin, using the energy from food, controlling appetite, keeping your digestive tract and nervous system working right, and preventing miscarriages and birth defects.
- Fiber for helping us to feel full, preventing constipation, helping to regulate blood sugar and cholesterol, and preventing bowel disorders.
**Fiber Up**

High-fiber grain products include:

- Whole wheat bread
- Cracked wheat bread
- Oatmeal
- Shredded wheat
- Bran cereals
- Popcorn

At least half of all daily calories from grains should be from whole grains.

**Sorting It Out**

Food labels often refer to the words “whole grain,” “enriched,” and “fortified.”

**Whole grain**: Whole grain products come from whole kernels of grain. During milling, the outside layer of grains is often removed. This layer is called the bran, or the germ. It contains most of the fiber and the nutrients of the grain. To be labeled “whole grain,” a product must list a whole grain as its first ingredient.

**These are whole grains**:

- Whole wheat
- Brown rice
- Whole oats
- Bulgur (cracked wheat)
- Popcorn
- Whole rye
- Graham flour
- Pearl barley
- Whole grain corn

**These are not whole grains**:

- Wheat flour
- Enriched flour
- Degermed cornmeal

**Enriched**: Products made from white flour and cornmeal are enriched. The vitamins and iron that were lost when the grain was milled are added back to the product. The fiber lost in milling is not added back.

Examples are _______________________

and ______________________________.

**Fortified**: Foods that are fortified have extra amounts of nutrients added during processing. Many breakfast cereals are fortified with vitamins and minerals. Sometimes fortified products cost more than products that have not been fortified.

Examples are _______________________

and ______________________________.

**Save Those Vitamins!**

The B vitamins dissolve in water. Do not wash rice before cooking and do not rinse rice, noodles, macaroni, or spaghetti after cooking.
Grains as Starches
Flour made from starchy grains may be used to thicken liquids for gravies, sauces, soups, fruit pies, and cobblers. Try making a sauce using wheat flour to perk up vegetables or meat dishes. A thicker sauce is made when more flour and fat are used. Follow the chart below to make the kind of sauce you want. Season your sauce with salt, pepper, herbs, onions, or garlic. To make cheese sauce, melt cheese into the prepared sauce over a low heat, stirring constantly. To make gravy, use beef or chicken broth instead of milk in the white sauce recipe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredient</th>
<th>Thin Sauce</th>
<th>Medium Sauce</th>
<th>Thick Sauce</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wheat flour</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
<td>3 tablespoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margarine</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
<td>3 tablespoons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonfat milk</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
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</tbody>
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1. Melt margarine in a heavy saucepan, over low heat.
2. Stir in flour. Continue stirring until mixture begins to bubble.
3. Slowly add milk, stirring to prevent lumps from forming.
4. Cook and stir until thickened. Do not boil.
5. Season as desired.

**Yield:** 1 cup sauce, or 8 servings.

**Per serving of medium white sauce:** 40 calories; 3 g fat; 0.5 g saturated fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 45 mg sodium.
Written by Kathy Daly-Koziel, former EFNEP Coordinator

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