



Wellness Wakeup Call

Newsletter for Grades 6-12

Month #3: Grains

Welcome to the Wellness Wakeup Call! This newsletter contains messages to be read each morning in school over the loud speaker for morning announcements. This program is an easy way to help fulfill the requirements of nutrition education goals for the federally mandated *Local Wellness Policies*. If there are more messages than school days in the month, generally, use the messages in order. The messages at the end reinforce points made in the beginning. Messages for next month will be available on the 15th of this month. We encourage you to notify parents about this program and direct them to our website to learn what their children are learning, and so they can try a healthy recipe!

- Each day, start the message with: **"Good morning, this is your Wellness Wakeup Call!"**
- Then read the message for the day. End each message with **"Enjoy your day, the healthy way!"**

1. Have you ever thought about what a grain is? A grain is the seed of a plant. A grain product is any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another grain that has been ground or pressed. Bread, pasta, tortillas, bagels, rice, and breakfast cereals are all grain products.
2. Did you know that there are two basic kinds of grains - whole grains and refined grains? Whole grains are more nutritious. Refined grains have been processed to remove part of the grain. What's left is not as good for you as a whole grain is.
3. Why are whole grains so good for you? They have lots of vitamins and fiber. When whole grains are refined, the fiber and many of these vitamins are lost.
4. You've probably eaten some whole grains before. Popcorn, oatmeal, brown rice, and whole wheat bread are all whole grain products. Barley, buckwheat, and millet are other whole grains that are popular in different parts of the world.
5. Grains come from all over the world and have been grown since ancient times. For example, amaranth (AM-aranth) was grown by the *Aztecs* while teff is popular in Ethiopia. Barley has been found along with mummies in Egypt.
6. Most of the grains that you eat should be whole grains. Some ways to eat more whole grains could be having a bowl of whole grain cereal at breakfast and a sandwich made with whole wheat bread at lunch. Other ideas include having a whole grain muffin for breakfast, a bowl of popcorn for a snack, and brown rice with your dinner.
7. Next time you go to the supermarket, see how many whole grain products you can find. One clue is a label that says "Whole Grain" in big letters. Look for the word "whole" in front of a grain that's the first ingredient on the ingredient list.
8. Don't be fooled when reading labels. If the ingredient label says "wheat flour" it's probably refined white flour and not "whole wheat". Look for "whole wheat" or "whole oats" if you want a food high in whole grains.
9. Just because a product's label says "multigrain", this does not automatically mean that it's a whole grain product. Look for words like "whole wheat" "brown rice" or "oats" as one of the first ingredients.
10. Don't let the color of the product trick you. Brown bread may not be made from whole-wheat flour. It could be colored to look brown. Check the ingredient label for "whole wheat" or "whole grain" as one of the first ingredients.
11. While some people make the mistake of thinking that whole grain breads and pasta are fattening, that's really not true. Unlike refined grains, whole grains take longer to chew and can make you feel full so that you stop eating before you eat too much.
12. Ask for whole grains when you go out to eat. You can get brown rice in many Chinese restaurants. Many restaurants offer whole grain breads and tortillas, and you may even be able to find a whole-wheat pizza crust. Just asking makes restaurants know that people want to eat more whole grains.
13. Start your day, the whole grain way! It takes just minutes to make oatmeal or another hot whole grain cereal for breakfast. Top your hot cereal with raisins, fresh fruit, nuts, or a dash of cinnamon.
14. Don't just eat one unsweetened whole grain breakfast cereal - make your own special mix! You can have it for breakfast or for an easy snack.
15. Try using whole wheat bread to make a sandwich. If you're used to using white bread, start with one slice of whole wheat and one slice of white. You'll get used to the more flavorful whole wheat bread quickly.
16. If you're a sandwich fan, try different kinds of whole grain breads and rolls. Pita pockets, wraps, sub rolls, tortillas, and bagels can all be found in whole grain varieties and can be used to make unique sandwiches.
17. Have you ever had whole-wheat spaghetti? It has a sweet nutty taste that's good in a pasta salad or with tomato sauce. If you want to ease into whole grains, try cooking half a package of whole grain pasta with half a package of refined pasta.
18. If you like to bake muffins, biscuits, pancakes, cookies, or other treats, try replacing a fourth to a half of the white flour in your recipes with whole grain flour.
19. On-the-go teens need healthy snacks. Smart snack choices are a part of a healthy eating plan.
20. A bowl of popcorn can be a great whole grain snack. Make airpopped popcorn or choose low-fat microwave or already popped popcorn that doesn't have something unhealthy called trans fats. Try sprinkling your popcorn with a little chili powder or some Italian seasoning.
21. Snack on low-fat whole grain crackers and pretzels. Make sure to look for ones without added salt. Don't forget to have a piece of fruit or vegetable, too!
22. Create your own trail mix featuring bitesize unsweetened whole grain cereals, walnuts or almonds, and raisins.

References for these tips can be found at www.healthy lunches.org.



Recipe of the Month

Vegetable Fried Rice

Fried Rice is an easy way to use up leftover brown rice. It's so good that you may find yourself making extra rice so you'll have some left for this recipe. Be sure to experiment with different kinds of vegetables. You can add sliced water chestnuts, shredded spinach, chopped broccoli or bok choy, mushrooms or other favorites.

See below for tips for cooking rice.

You will need:

- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and cut into small pieces
- 4 cups cooked, cold brown rice
- 1 cup frozen peas, thawed
- 2 tablespoons reduced sodium soy sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon ginger powder



What to do:

Heat oil in a large skillet or wok over medium high heat. Add onions and carrots and cook, stirring for 5 minutes or until soft. If you are using vegetables like broccoli, mushrooms or bok choy, add them along with the onions and carrots. Add rice, peas, (and spinach or water chestnuts or other quick-cooking vegetables) and soy sauce and sprinkle on garlic powder and ginger powder. Cook, stirring about 5 minutes or until rice is hot. Makes 6 servings.

Nutritional analysis per serving[†]: 209 calories; 2 grams protein; 4 grams fat; 37 grams carbohydrate; 4.3 grams dietary fiber; 31 milligrams calcium; 1.2 milligrams iron; 1.1 milligrams zinc; 248 milligrams sodium

[†]Nutritional analysis was done using the basic recipe.

How to Cook Brown Rice:

Stovetop: To make 4 cups of cooked rice, combine 1-1/2 cups of brown rice and 3 cups of water in a saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, then cover and lower heat to medium-low. Simmer covered for 45 minutes or until water is absorbed.

Microwave: To make 4 cups of cooked rice, combine 1-1/2 cups of brown rice and 3 cups of water in a microwave safe container (choose your container to allow room for the rice to expand). Cover container and microwave on high for 8 minutes, then at 30% power for 30 minutes.