



# Whole Grain Handout

## What is a whole grain?

Whole grain foods have all three parts of the grain: the bran, the endosperm, and germ. Each part of the whole provides nutrients. Eating all of the grain, however, is even more healthful because all three parts can work together.



## How can you tell if a food is whole grain?

Look at the package and label. Look for the words, “whole grain.” Check the ingredient list, too. The first ingredient listed is present in the highest quantity by weight. If the food is high in a whole grain, it will be listed first. Furthermore, look for the word “whole” in front of a grain. For example “whole wheat flour” is a whole grain, but “wheat flour” is not.

## What ingredients are not whole grain?

Multigrain, 100% wheat, stone ground, and pumpernickel are not necessarily whole grain. Many of these products have grains and flour, but they do not have whole grains or whole grain flour.

Looking at the Nutrition Facts label also provides clues about which products are whole grain. Specifically, look at the amount of fiber in one serving. Most whole grain products will have 2 or 3 grams of fiber per serving whereas the refined grain products will have 1 gram.

## How to Choose a Whole Wheat Bread

1. Find the ingredient list on the bread wrapper.
2. Choose bread that lists **whole wheat** as the first ingredient.



Ingredients of two different breads:	
This one <i>is</i> whole wheat	Example 1: <b>Whole wheat flour</b> , water, wheat gluten, corn syrup, honey, soybean oil, yeast
This one is <i>not</i> whole wheat	Example 2: <b>Wheat flour</b> , water, whole wheat flour, corn syrup, honey, soybean oil, yeast

Even though Example 2 contains whole wheat flour, it is not considered a whole grain product because it is not the first ingredient listed.

**Important reminders:**

- On labels, wheat flour is another name for white flour.
- “Enriched” means that iron and B-vitamins have been added back. But most of the fiber, zinc, and other vitamins and minerals are gone.
- Whole wheat means that all parts of the wheat kernel are included—bran, germ and endosperm.
- Other parts of bread wrappers can be misleading. Ignore pictures and big print that might give the false impression of being “whole wheat”—look at the ingredient list instead.
- Look for grams of fiber per serving on the Nutrition Facts label.

**What are some ideas for whole grain foods?**

- Brown rice (regular, quick)
- Oatmeal, whole or rolled oats (regular, quick, instant)
- Pearl barley
- Popcorn
- Whole wheat
- Wild rice

**Other types:**

- Amaranth
- Buckwheat or kasha, buckwheat groats
- Cracked wheat (also called bulgar)
- Kamut
- Millet
- Quinoa
- Spelt
- Teff
- Triticales
- Whole grain corn or cornmeal (yellow and white)
- Whole rye



## How can you add more whole grains to your daily meals?

- Fix quick, ready-to-eat or ready-to-cook whole grain cereal for breakfast.
- Choose whole grain breads, tortillas, bagels, pita pockets or rolls.
- Eat popcorn for a snack.
- Add whole grains to mixed dishes. Try adding wild rice to soups or casseroles.
- Add oats to cookies or other desserts. Use oats in place of bread crumbs in meatloaf.
- Substitute  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the white flour called for in recipes with whole grain flour.

### References:

Information from *Healthful Whole Grains*, Mary Meck Higgins, Ph.D., R.D., L.D., CDE; Kansas State University, September 2002.

*Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture, January 2005.

Section entitled *How to Choose a Whole Wheat Bread*: Used with permission from Linda Rellergert, Nutrition Specialist, University of Missouri Extension.