MyPlate Nutrition Education Series: Make Half Your Grains Whole Grains¹

USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, with an Introduction by Linda B. Bobroff²

After introducing MyPlate in June 2011, USDA provided a series of one-page fact sheets to help consumers use the dietary advice of the Dietary Guidelines 2010. The USDA added new fact sheets in December 2011 and continued adding fact sheets in 2012, 2013, and 2014. These fact sheets are distributed by UF/IFAS Extension for Extension faculty, health professionals, and consumers.

This fact sheet is Make Half Your Grains Whole, and it can be found on the attached PDF.
10 tips
Nutrition Education Series

Make half your grains whole grains

Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley, or another cereal grain is a grain product. Grains are divided into two subgroups, whole grains and refined grains. Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel—the bran, germ, and endosperm. People who eat whole grains as part of a healthy eating style have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases.

1. Make simple shifts
   To make half your grains whole grains, choose 100% whole-wheat bread, bagels, pasta, or tortillas; brown rice; oatmeal; or grits.

2. Whole grains can be healthy snacks
   Popcorn is a whole grain. Make it with little or no added salt or butter. Also, try 100% whole-wheat or rye crackers.

3. Save some time
   Cook extra brown rice or oatmeal when you have time. Refrigerate half of what you cook to heat and serve later in the week.

4. Mix it up with whole grains
   Use whole grains in mixed dishes, such as barley in vegetable soups or stews and bulgur wheat in casseroles or stir-fries. Try a quinoa salad or pilaf.

5. Try whole-wheat versions
   Change up your favorite meal with whole grains. Try brown rice stuffing in baked green peppers or tomatoes, and whole-wheat noodles in lasagna.

6. Bake up some whole-grain goodness
   Experiment by substituting buckwheat, millet, or oat flour for up to half of the flour in your favorite pancake or waffle recipes. To limit saturated fat and added sugars, top with fruit instead of butter and syrup.

7. Be a good role model for children
   Set a good example for children by serving and eating whole grains every day with meals or as snacks.

8. Check the label
   Most refined grains are enriched. This means that certain B vitamins and iron are added back after processing. Check the ingredients list to make sure the word "enriched" is included in the grain name.

9. Know what to look for on the ingredients list
   Read the ingredients list and choose products that name a whole-grain ingredient first on the list. Look for "whole wheat," "brown rice," "bulgur," "buckwheat," "oatmeal," "whole-grain cornmeal," "whole oats," or "whole rye."

10. Be a smart shopper
    The color of a food is not an indication that it is a whole-grain food. Foods labeled as "multi-grain," "stone-ground," "100% wheat," "cracked wheat," "seven-grain," or "bran" are usually not 100% whole-grain products, and may not contain any whole grain.

Go to ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information.