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Smart Choices for YOUNG FAMILIES

September

A Newsletter from the EFNEP/SCNEP Programs of Virginia Cooperative Extension

Welcome to the September Issue of **Smart Choices for YOUNG FAMILIES**. This issue will give you important information and recipes on grain foods and how to choose the most nutritious breads and cereals. In general, grain foods are less expensive than other foods. Whole-grain foods make a special contribution to health. Learn why in this issue. Also, learn some ways to teach children good eating habits and to help prevent diabetes.



MyPyramid.gov
STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU



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Nutrition and Health Tips for Today

Whole-Grain Food – What’s in it for you

A “whole-grain food” is one made from the whole kernel, including the germ, starch, and outer shell. Most of the vitamins, minerals, and fiber of grain are located in the germ and outer shell. Refined-grain foods contain only the starchy section and are lower in other nutrients. White bread and white rice are examples of “refined”-grain foods. To choose a whole-grain food, look on the food label for one of these words as the first ingredient:

oatmeal	whole oats	whole rye
whole wheat	graham flour	wheat germ
wild rice	brown rice	bulgur

MyPyramid (go to <http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/index.html>) shows grains as the largest portion of what we should eat. This guide shows that most adults should eat 6 to 8 ounces of grain foods each day. About half of these servings should be whole-grain foods. A slice of bread or 1/2 to 3/4 cup of dry cereal is about 1 ounce. Whole-grain foods contain nutrients that were lost from the refined product during milling. Here are some nutrients found in whole grains and what they do for us:

Fiber

- Prevents constipation;
- Speeds waste through bowels, reducing exposure to cancer-causing substances;
- Takes some cholesterol out of the body, which reduces heart disease risk; and
- Gives a full feeling, which helps in weight control.

B Vitamins

There are 8 B Vitamins that play many roles the body. They:

- Work like spark plugs to help the body use carbohydrates and fat for energy;
- Help cells use protein and other nutrients to build new cells; and
- Help keep the nervous system healthy and working properly.

Folate or folic acid

This is a B vitamin that has been in the news because of its important health benefits. In pregnancy, it helps the baby’s brain and spine to develop normally, preventing spina bifida. For everyone, folate is essential for a healthy heart and helps prevent heart disease. Everyone needs to get 100% of the Daily Value (DV) of folate. To do this, check bread and cereal labels and choose those with 100% DV of folate, or eat enough of several sources to equal 100% in a day.

Staying Healthy for a Lifetime

Preventing Diabetes. Diabetes is a disease that strikes fear in the hearts of many people. A person with diabetes does not produce enough insulin, or the available insulin is not working properly. As a result, glucose (sugar) rises to harmful levels in the blood. Normal glucose levels are 70 and 100 mg/dL when you haven’t eaten for about 8 hours. After eating, a normal glucose level is less than 140 mg/dL. If your values are higher than this on two occasions, you may have either “pre-diabetes” or full diabetes. You should have your blood sugar checked at least once a year. If the test shows your blood sugar is too high, follow your doctor’s advice.

Risk Factors for Diabetes. Type 2 diabetes is the most common form and usually occurs in adulthood. But due to the rise in obesity in recent years, young children are getting type 2 diabetes. There are several risk factors for type 2 diabetes:

- Having a close relative with the disease (including a parent, brother, sister, or grandparent).
- Being obese or overweight (i.e. having too much body fat).
- Getting little physical activity on a regular basis.
- Having birthed a baby that weighed more than 9 pounds.
- Having pre-diabetes (fasting blood sugar = 100 to 139 mg/dL on two tests), but doing nothing about it.

What you can do to help prevent diabetes:

- Lose weight or avoid gaining any more. A loss of only 5% to 10% of body weight will be beneficial.
- Increase physical activity (see next section).
- Eat more vegetables and fruits: Each day, eat the equivalent of 2 cups of fruit and 2 1/2 cups of vegetables while cutting down on meats.
- Eat 6 to 8 ounces grain foods; about half should be whole-grain.
- Cut intake of high-fat, high-sugar, and high-calorie foods.
- Keep portion size down and avoid “super-sized” servings in restaurants.

For more information on diabetes, go to: <http://www.diabetes.org/home.jsp>.

Staying Fit and Having Fun

Fitting Physical Activity into a Busy Schedule: You may have heard that adults should get at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day. Adults who are trying to lose weight need 60 minutes a day. Children should be active for at least 60 minutes per day. Do you feel you don't have enough time in your busy day to exercise? Get ready to solve that problem!

First, consider the benefits of a more active lifestyle: improved heart health, increased strength and energy, weight loss or not gaining more weight, looking your best, and preventing diabetes and other diseases. Physical activity can add years to your life and life to your years! Aren't you worth it?

1. Set a goal for how many minutes you will exercise each day, but avoid the "all-or-nothing attitude." Although one hour of physical activity each day is optimal, you will benefit from any amount. All the activity doesn't have to be done at once, but can be spaced throughout the day in 10- to 15-minute bouts.
2. Rethink your idea of what exercise or physical activity is. A gym membership is not necessary for physical activity. Walking is a great activity and requires only a good pair of shoes.

3. Fit physical activity into your daily routine like this:

- Don't pay at the pump for gasoline. Walk inside to pay.
- Avoid elevators and escalators. Walk up the stairs instead.
- When going grocery shopping, park farther from the store. Walking extra steps adds up.
- Don't drive through at the bank. Walk in instead.
- If you don't have a good place to walk in your neighborhood, go to a mall.
- Keep your physical activity goal in mind, but be flexible on how you meet it.

**Remember –
improved health ...
who doesn't have
time for that?**



Cooking Corner

Red Beans and Brown Rice (makes 6 servings)

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup brown (wild) rice
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1 slice bacon (raw), cut in small pieces
- 1 medium chopped onion
- 2 stalks celery, cut in small pieces
- 1/2 cup chopped green pepper
- 1 15-ounce can red kidney beans (can use any type of canned or dried beans or peas)
- 1/2 teaspoon hot sauce (optional)
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper

Directions:

1. Bring rice and water to a boil, cover tightly, reduce heat and cook until water is absorbed (about 1 hour).
2. To large frying pan, add bacon pieces, onion, celery, and green pepper and cook over low heat for 10 minutes.
3. Add undrained beans or peas and seasonings. Bring to a boil, cover, and simmer 5 minutes.
4. Add cooked rice and mix lightly. Add a little water if mixture is too thick.

Serve with slaw for a complete meal. Each serving contains 130 calories and 8 grams of fiber.

Apple-Oatmeal Crunch (makes 8 servings)

Ingredients:

- 8 medium apples, peeled and sliced thin
- 1/3 cup flour (use whole wheat if available)
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 cup raw oatmeal (rolled oats)
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup margarine, melted

Directions:

1. Spray an 8" baking dish with non-stick spray.
2. If apples are tart, add artificial sweetener to taste. Spread apple slices in baking dish.
3. In mixing bowl, combine flour, cinnamon, oats, and sugar. Stir in margarine.
4. Sprinkle oat/flour mixture over apples.
5. Bake at 350° for 35 to 40 minutes.

Each serving has 215 calories and 4 grams of fiber. You can substitute canned or fresh peaches for apples.

Keeping Food Safe

Food Safety Tips for a Grab & Go World

Do you often carry food home from a restaurant? Does your child like to carry his/her lunch to school? This is okay, if you follow good food safety practices. Carry-out food or packed lunches can be a food-safety hazard. Here are some tips to make sure you or your children don't get food poisoning.



Tip 1: More than two is bad for you.

Two hours is the longest time that foods should be at room temperature. Get the food home as fast as possible and refrigerate. Discard foods that have set out more than 2 hours.

Tip 2: Here's the rule, get it cool.

Refrigerate all cooked foods within 2 hours. Divide large amounts into shallow containers, cover, and refrigerate. Don't wait for them to cool completely. Carry packed lunches in an insulated lunch bag with a frozen gel pack.

Tip 3: Avoid delay, eat in a day.

Eat take-out foods, carried meals, and leftovers by the end of the next day.

Tip 4: Don't miss a beat, safely reheat.

For microwave reheating, remove food from original container unless it is described as "safe for microwave use." Reheat food until steaming hot at 165°. Do not reheat foods in a slow cooker or crock pot.

Tip 5: Wrap it or scrap it.

Cover left-over food tightly before storing. Choose moisture and vapor-proof wrapping or plastic containers. Plastic containers should have a tight-fitting lid and be easy to clean.

Tip 6: Germs are mean, so keep it clean.

Wash hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before handling food. Pack lunches using clean hands and a clean bag. Thoroughly clean food-storage containers after each use.

Tip 7: When in doubt, toss it out.

Germs that cause food-borne illness can't always be seen, smelled, or tasted. So if you aren't sure of its safety, toss it out.

Children's Corner



Tips On Teaching Your Children to Like Healthy Foods

- Be a good role model. If your children see you eat healthy foods, they are more likely to do the same. But don't force them or get into a struggle. Be patient, keep offering that food, and keep encouraging the child to taste it. It also helps if other adults in the family eat that food, or at least don't make negative remarks about it.
- For children to learn to like a food, it has to be available. So, keep healthy choices on hand and limit those that are not so healthy.
- Make eating together a goal in your home. Family meals are a great time for children to share their day with you. It is also the best time to try new foods together. Keep meal time free of quarrels and avoid using it as a time to punish a child for something done earlier.
- If you pack lunches for your children, make them healthy. MyPyramid recommends that we eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. This is important for children, as well as adults. You can teach your child to like healthy foods by packing wholesome lunches. An example of a healthy lunch is a sandwich of turkey or ham on whole-grain bread, a piece of fruit or carrot sticks, and tortilla chips. This will be lower in cost and more nutritious than prepackaged lunch products. Those are often high in cost and high in fat, sugar, and salt. If this is a school lunch, be sure to put it in an insulated lunch bag with a frozen gel pack.



Saving Money at the Grocery Store

Shopping for Healthy Grain Foods

It can be quite an adventure to shop in the cereal aisle! There are so many choices that it can be confusing. With a little know-how, you can choose cereals that are high in fiber and food value and taste good too.

Including whole-grain breads and cereals in your eating pattern starts at the grocery store. Just look on the label and choose those that have a whole grain listed first. Choose those that contain at least 2 grams of fiber, but are low in sugar and fat. Try to find one that has at least 25% of the DV for folic acid. Once or twice a week, try a low-fat meatless meal or main dish that contains a whole grain. Examples are whole-wheat/spinach noodles, whole-wheat lasagna, and red beans over brown (wild) rice (see recipe in the Cooking Corner).

September Word Search

Search for the bold words listed below in the letters to the right. Circle the words as you find them. They may go across, down, diagonal, or backwards.

WHOLE GRAIN FOOD – product made from the whole kernel of a grain so it contains more nutrients.

BROWN RICE – a whole-grain rice.

WHOLE WHEAT – an ingredient that you should look for on the food label.

OATMEAL – a whole-grain cereal you have to cook.

FIBER – nutrient that prevents constipation.

B VITAMINS – nutrients that help the body use carbohydrates and fat for energy.

FOLATE – a B vitamin; in pregnancy, it helps the baby's brain and spine to develop normally.

FOLIC ACID – this is another term used for the folate B vitamin.

DIABETES – a disease in which a person does not produce enough insulin or the insulin is not working properly.

OBESE – having too much body fat.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY – actively moving your body which helps you to lose or maintain weight.

TAKE THE STAIRS – an easy way to fit physical activity into your daily routine.

FOOD SAFETY PRACTICES – things you can do to make sure you or your child do not get food poisoning.

MYPYRAMID – a guide for healthy eating.

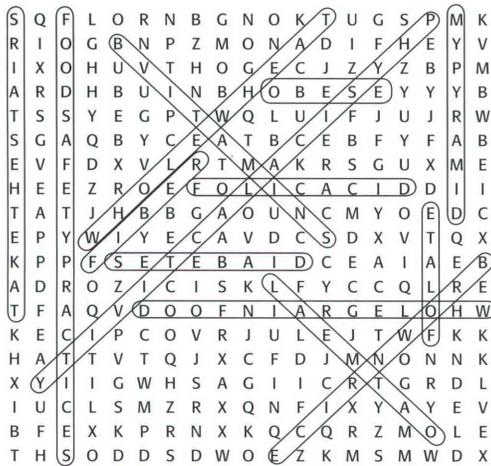
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Tips for buying whole-grain foods

- Check the ingredient list for a whole grain listed first (see page 2). If the “whole grain” comes later in the list, the food may contain very little.
- Don't be fooled by thinking that all brown bread is whole grain. It may only have brown color added.
- Try the store-brand breads and cereals, as they usually cost much less than national brands and taste just as good.
- Watch for cents-off coupons for cereals, especially those that contain whole grain. Don't be tempted to buy high-sugar cereals, with little nutritional value, just because you have a coupon.
- Cereals in large bags cost less and are just as good as those in boxes.
- Oatmeal, cream of wheat, and other cereals that you cook at home are lower in cost and higher in nutrients.
- If you like more crunch in cereal, buy a box of all-bran or other crunchy cereal and sprinkle some on cooked cereal.
- Day-old bread costs about half what fresh bread costs. It is good for toasting or cooking.
- Highly fortified cereals that give 100% of a long list of nutrients may cost more and are not necessary for health.



**Word
 Search
 Solution**



For more information contact:

For more information on good nutrition and health:

<http://www.ext.vt.edu/healthyfutures/>

www.ext.vt.edu

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The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. Call this toll-free number, 1-800-552-3431 (M-F 8:15-5:00, except holidays), to learn how to apply for food stamps and to get other useful information about services.

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