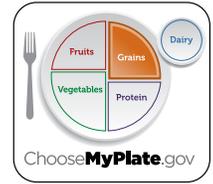


GRAINS LESSON



Dear Parent,

Your child attended a Food, Fun, & Reading lesson today. Food, Fun, & Reading gets children excited about trying nutritious foods through reading and fun activities. Each lesson focuses on a different USDA MyPlate food group. Today, your child learned about the Grains group. Please see the attached handouts for more information including MyPlate tips for parents, a kid's activity sheet, and kid-friendly recipes to try at home.

USDA's MyPlate recommends that children and adults eat whole grains for half of their servings of grains each day. Some examples of whole grains are whole wheat bread, whole grain crackers, whole wheat pasta, oatmeal, barley, quinoa, brown rice, popcorn, farro, and millet. When whole grains are processed, the entire grain kernel is retained, which includes the bran, germ, and endosperm. These parts of the grain contain B vitamins, minerals, and fiber, which are removed when grains are refined to make white rice and white flour products (i.e., white bread, tortillas, and regular crackers). Because of the additional nutrients whole grains have to offer, USDA's MyPlate recommends that we choose more of these foods.

Recognizing whole grain products can be tricky. Whole grains are usually darker in color than refined grain products; however, color alone is not always an indicator that a product is made from whole grains. (Manufacturers can add coloring to refined products to make them darker.) The best way to identify a whole grain is to read the ingredient label on the package. If the first ingredient is a whole grain – whole wheat flour, whole cornmeal, oats, or brown rice – it is likely a whole grain (since ingredients are listed in order of weight).

Some children may be reluctant to try whole grains, which are usually darker brown than their refined or "white" counterpart.

Here are some strategies to try to encourage your child to eat more whole grains.

- Try kid-friendly whole grain cereals. Choose lower sugar varieties and add a sliced banana or strawberries for a sweeter flavor.
- Serve hot cereals such as oatmeal or quinoa. Add milk, sliced fruit, or a drizzle of honey.
- Experiment with different versions of whole grain bread. Try whole grain wraps, English muffins, or pita pockets when making a sandwich or mini pizza.
- Mix a refined grain, such as traditional pasta, with whole grain pasta so little ones can ease into the taste and texture.
- Substitute whole wheat flour for half of the white flour when making a pizza crust or pancakes.
- Choose whole grain snacks such as whole wheat crackers or popcorn.

Sincerely,

The Food \$ense Team

REFERENCES

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