

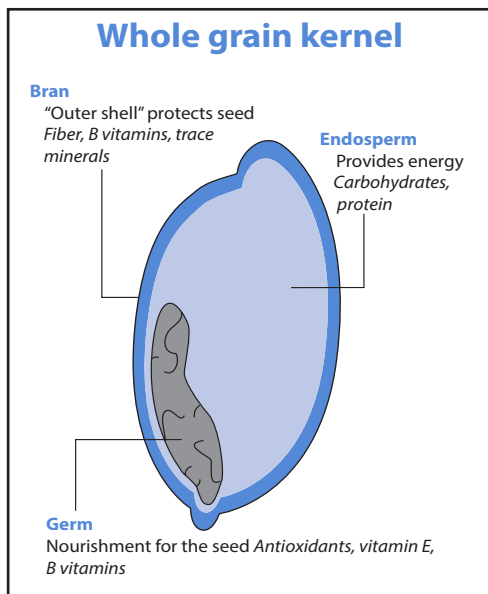
Mealtime Memo

for Child Care

Whole Grains – Why Not!

Whole Grains: Something to Talk About!

Introducing and serving whole grains in child care facilities is a great way to provide young children with nutritious foods. Providing whole grains early in life will more likely help children to continue to choose whole grains in their teen and adult years. Whole grains may or may not be served regularly at home; however, they may still be introduced to children while in child care. Through exposure, young children may like the taste of whole grain cereals and could begin to ask for the same foods at home.



What is a whole grain?

A whole grain has three parts: the bran, the endosperm, and the germ. The bran is the outer shell of the seed and contains most of the seed's fiber. When a grain has been refined, it only has the endosperm, also called the kernel. It makes up the bulk of the seed and contains small amounts of vitamins and minerals. The germ is the part of the seed from which a new plant sprouts. It's a concentrated source of nutrients.

Why Make Whole Grains Available to Children?

Offering whole grains to children provides an opportunity for them to eat food that is full of nutrients and can help with keeping their digestive track functioning correctly. Whole grain foods are more filling and provide more nutrients. Including whole grains as part of a healthy diet may help reduce constipation by staying intact and, like bristles in a toothbrush, help clean the digestive system. Whole grains also provide:

- Antioxidants
- B vitamins
- Iron
- Magnesium
- Vitamin E

Be a Role Model

During lunchtime, child care providers can sit at the table to model and encourage children to try new and familiar whole grain foods on their plate. While sitting at the table, children will observe adults as well as other children trying new foods, which may help them try it as well. Consider that some children may not want to try new foods. It may take offering foods several times before they will try it.



References

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Try It, You May Like It

Ooodles of Noodles

This colorful, whole-wheat pasta dish with grape tomatoes and Swiss chard, and delicately flavored with basil and garlic.

Ingredients

- 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups Penne pasta, whole-wheat, dry (11 oz)
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp Extra virgin olive oil
- 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups Fresh grape tomatoes, halved
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp Sea salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp Ground black pepper
- 1 Tbsp Fresh garlic, minced
- 3 Tbsp Whole-wheat flour
- 2 $\frac{1}{3}$ cups Low-sodium vegetable broth
- 4 cups Fresh Swiss chard, stems removed, chopped

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 20 minutes

Makes six 1-cup servings



Directions

1. In a large pot, bring 2 quarts water to a boil. Gradually stir in pasta and return to a boil. Cook uncovered for about 8-10 minutes until tender. Do not overcook. Drain well.
2. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add half of tomatoes and cook 2-3 minutes until skins soften. Do not overcook. Reserve remaining tomatoes for step 4. Add basil, salt, pepper, and garlic. Stir.
3. Sprinkle flour over tomatoes. Cook for 30 seconds over medium heat until mixture becomes thick. Add vegetable broth. Bring to a boil and then immediately reduce to low heat.
4. Add Swiss chard and remaining tomatoes. Simmer uncovered over low heat for 1-2 minutes or until Swiss chard is wilted. Pour over pasta. Serve hot.

1 cup provides $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vegetable, and 2 oz equivalent grains.

Note

For larger serving sizes, refer to Team Nutrition's *Recipe for Healthy Kids Cookbook for Child Care Centers*.

Adapted from *Recipes for healthy kids: Cookbook for homes*. Available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/recipes-healthy-kids-cookbook-homes>.

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