

EAT

CAFETERIA CONNECTION

Instruct students to find three whole grain foods on the nutrition poster in the cafeteria or that may be offered with the school meal. Decide if there are any whole grain foods on the poster or on the menus that were not mentioned in class during the meal planning activity.

Discuss your findings when the students come back to class.

LEARN

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Objective

Students will be able to plan a healthy breakfast that includes whole grain foods.

10 Minute Lesson

The teacher will lead a short discussion about the benefits of whole grain foods. Through teacher-guided discussion, students will identify ways they could plan to incorporate whole grains into their breakfast.

LIVE

HOME ACTIVITY

Have students examine the ingredient labels of the various breakfast grain foods they eat at home, in order to determine if they are a whole grain food. If they do not eat whole grains for breakfast, instruct students to make a plan to incorporate some into their diet. Ask the students to discuss their findings and plans in class.

Teachers Notes Background

Whole Grains are Considered “Super-Foods”

- **Super for Your Waistline** People who regularly eat whole grains are more likely to maintain a healthy weight. This might be because they are high in fiber which makes you feel full longer, so you may be less likely to over eat.
- **Super for Your Insides** The fiber in whole grains exercise your intestines and keeps you “regular.” Whole grains contain B vitamins, iron, vitamin E, magnesium, special phytochemicals, and unique antioxidants, too- so besides being super nourishing, they may even protect you from heart disease, stroke, and certain cancers.
- **Super Natural** Whole grains are so nourishing because, unlike refined grains contained in foods like white bread or rice, they still contain all the naturally occurring parts of the grain- the bran, germ, and endosperm. That’s where many of the special nutrients in whole grains are found.
- **Super Easy to Find** Food labels list ingredients in descending order. The most prevalent ingredient is first, the least prevalent is last. To determine if a food item contains a significant amount of whole grains, look for these words to appear first or second on the ingredient section of the food label: whole grain [name of grain, such as wheat or corn], stone-ground whole [grain], brown rice, oats, oatmeal (including old-fashioned oatmeal, instant oatmeal) or wheat berries.
- **Super Tasty** Whole wheat, corn, brown rice, oats, barley, quinoa, sorghum, spelt, rye are key ingredients in many delicious foods. More and more whole grain products are available to buy than ever before. Whole grains even include popcorn!

LEARN 10 Minute Lesson

Begin leading a discussion by asking the students questions about whole grains: What is a whole grain food? Why are they considered to be healthy? How can you identify one? *Refer to the background information above for answers.*

How many servings should you have each day? *The Dietary Guidelines for Americans say “make half of your grains whole.” Most teens should have 6 – 10 servings of grain per day, so that means 3 – 5 servings of whole grain per day.*

What are some quick and easy ways you could plan to build whole grains into your breakfast? *Examples are: Have a cup of instant oatmeal; eat a bowl of cold cereal made with oats or whole wheat (for example, Frosted Mini Wheats, Cheerios or Life), toast a whole wheat bagel, English muffin, or bread and top it w/ cheese or peanut butter; scramble some eggs and wrap them up in a whole wheat tortillas; eat a small package of whole grain crackers; or grab a granola or cereal bar made with whole grain oats.*

Introduce and explain the EAT Cafeteria Connection and LEARN Home Activity to the students.

Optional Enrichment Idea

Have each student bring two ingredient labels from foods containing whole grains into class. Labels could be saved from empty food packages from home, from packaged food eaten in the school cafeteria, or they can research common brand-name foods on the Internet and print out their ingredient information. Have students name the food and the whole grain ingredient(s) they contain.