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MAKE LUNCHTIME A WHOLE GRAIN CHOICE

Last week I featured how to get more whole grains at breakfast. So, moving on to the rest of the day's menu, try these ideas and product suggestions to make lunchtime a whole grain choice too! The goal is to get 48 grams per day based on a 2000-calorie diet, the standard used for food labels.

For lunches, serve sandwiches on whole grain breads. Sounds simple but actually it is not. Products labeled with the words "multi-grain," "stone-ground," "100% wheat," "seven grain," "pumpernickel," "organic," or "bran" may actually contain little or no whole grain. Color is not an indication of whole grain either. Bread is often brown because of added molasses, not because of it containing whole grain. The way to be sure is to look for the words "whole wheat" or "whole grain" on the nutrition label list of ingredients.

If young ones cry for white bread with its soft texture, you can fool them with the new breads made from white whole wheat. White whole wheat is 100% whole grain but has a lighter color and texture. Most manufactures now offer breads and sandwich rolls that are at least whole grain. It is important to read the label and look for the whole grain stamp, which identifies how many grams of whole grain are in a serving.

This voluntary labeling is an excellent tool for making decisions at the checkout aisle and I anticipate more companies will start to use it.



Another option is to use wraps typically stocked in the supermarket refrigerator section. Read the list of ingredients and look for the word WHOLE. Just like breads, the name may be misleading and you may have a refined grain product. Most corn tortillas are not whole grain. Two brands who offer a variety of wraps made with whole grains are LaTortilla Factory and Mission Foods.

Also soup, a popular choice during these colder winter months, is a healthy and delicious way to add whole grains to the diet. Beef and barley soup or chicken with wild rice soup are obvious choices, which can be bought in a can, or try your hand at homemade soup. Try the recipes below, or be adventurous and do a search with your computer, the possibilities are endless. If time is an issue, Quaker makes quick cooking barley that cooks in only 10 minutes. Another time saver is to cook brown or wild rice ahead of time and freeze it.

On your next trip to the supermarket, take a stroll down the cracker aisle. Many popular items are reformulated so they contain at least some whole grain. Read labels and the list of ingredients and do not trust the name of the product to reflect the nutritional value. A multi-grain cracker can be a totally refined grain product. Again, look for the voluntary whole grain stamp.

Forget the potato chips and try some other options like Frito-Lay SunChips®, providing 18 grams of whole grains per serving. Both tortilla chips and popcorn are 100% whole grain. Snyder's of Hanover offers pretzels, pita chips, sunflower chips, tortilla chips and cheddar puffs made with whole grains. To find out how many grams are in your favorite snacks go to the Whole Grains Council website at www.wholegrainscouncil.com and look under the "Find Whole Grains" section. Many crackers and snacks are high in fat so limit servings and select brands without trans fat. The 100-calorie packages are an easy way to control portion size.

Make lunchtime sweet with a healthy grain based dessert. Granola bars, made with oats, are all whole grain regardless of the brand. Chips Ahoy!® makes a 100% whole grain chocolate chip cookie as well as Nabisco Fig Newtons. Take your favorite cookie recipe and substitute one third of the all-purpose flour with white whole wheat and you have a healthier option.

For more recipes try these cookbooks

2007. Hodson Mill Whole Grain Baking, Beverly, MA: Fair Winds Press.

2006. King Arthur Flour Whole Grain Baking, Woodstock, Vermont: The Countryman Press.

Both are available through Frederick County public library.

MUSHROOM BARLEY SOUP

1 tablespoon olive oil (divided use)
1 large onion, chopped (1 1/2 to 2 cups)
2 medium carrots, peeled and diced (3/4 cup)
2 ribs celery, diced (3/4 cup)
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon dried thyme
6 cups low-sodium, fat free beef OR chicken broth
1/2 cup pearl barley*
1 1/2 pounds fresh mushrooms, rinsed and thoroughly dried, stem ends trimmed, quartered (about 7 cups)
1/2 cup chopped fresh dill
1 tablespoon lemon juice
Salt and black pepper to taste
1/2 cup fat-free sour cream (optional)

Heat 2 teaspoons olive oil in a heavy soup pot (4-6 quart capacity) over medium heat. Add onion, carrots, and celery; cook, stirring often, until softened, 4-5 minutes. Add flour, garlic, and thyme; cook, stirring, for 30 seconds. Add 1 cup of the broth and bring to a simmer, stirring constantly. Add remaining broth and barley; increase heat to high, bring to a simmer, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer until barley is almost tender, about 35 minutes. Meanwhile, heat remaining 1

teaspoon of oil in a large nonstick skillet over high heat. Add mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally, until browned and tender, 5 to 7 minutes. After barley has simmered for 35 minutes, add sautéed mushrooms (and any accumulated liquid in the skillet) to the soup. Simmer, uncovered, until barley is tender and flavors have blended, about 3 to 5 minutes longer. Stir in dill, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Garnish each serving with a dollop of sour cream, if desired. Serves 9 (1 cup portion). Nutritional Analysis per serving: 80 calories, 1.5g total fat, 0g saturated fat, 0mg cholesterol, 315mg sodium, 4g fiber.

* To shorten cooking time, use quick cooking barley instead of pearl barley and simmer soup for 15 to 20 minutes instead of 35.

GREEK CHICKEN SOUP

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon all-purpose flour
2 large eggs
7 cups fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth, divided
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 1/2 cups finely chopped onion
Dash of salt
1 1/2 cups leftover cooked chicken, shredded (light and dark meat)
1 cup cooked wild OR brown rice
1 cup shredded romaine lettuce
1/2 cup sliced green onions
1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill
1/2 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Combine 2 tablespoons lemon juice and flour in a bowl; whisk until smooth. Add eggs; whisk until combined.

Bring 1 cup broth to a simmer in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Gradually add hot broth to egg mixture, stirring constantly with a whisk. Return egg mixture to pan. Cook 2 minutes or until slightly thick, whisking constantly. Remove from heat; set aside.

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the onion and a dash of salt, and sauté 8 minutes or until tender. Add 6 cups broth; bring to boil. Reduce heat, and simmer 5 minutes. Add chicken meat, and simmer 2 minutes. Add rice, and slowly whisk in egg mixture. Keep warm over low heat. Add remaining ingredients immediately before serving. Makes 6 servings (serving size 1 1/3 cups) 232 calories, 9.1g fat, 18g protein; 17g carbohydrates; 2g fiber; 98mg cholesterol; 1.5mg iron; 697mg sodium; 34mg calcium.

QUAKER OATS AWESOME OATMEAL COOKIES

1 cup firmly packed brown sugar
1 egg
1/2 cup vegetable oil, preferably canola
1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
1 teaspoon vanilla
3/4 cup whole-wheat flour
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 cups Quaker oats (quick or old fashioned, uncooked)
1 cup raisins (OR dried cranberries, mixed dried fruit pieces, mini chocolate chips or chopped nuts)

Heat oven to 350°F. In large bowl, beat brown sugar, egg, oil, applesauce and vanilla on medium speed of electric mixer until combined. Add combined flours, baking soda and salt; beat on low speed just until blended. Stir in oats and “mix-ins.”

Drop dough by level measuring tablespoonfuls about 2 inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheets.

Bake 9 to 10 minutes, until light brown. (Do not overbake. Centers will appear soft.) Cool 1 to 2 minutes on cookie sheets; transfer to wire racks. Cool completely. Store tightly covered. Makes about 36 cookies.

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