News Release

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Eat Smarter and Healthier, Focus on whole grains

If eating smarter and healthier is one of your New Year’s resolutions, try focusing on eating more whole grains.

Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel – the bran, germ and endosperm. Eating whole grain foods helps increase fiber consumption and reduction of some chronic diseases. Fiber creates a feeling of fullness with fewer calories, which can help curb your appetite. Check the Nutrition Facts label for fiber content of whole-grain foods. Good sources of fiber contain 10% to 19% of the Daily Value; excellent sources contain 20% or more.

The color of a food is not an indication that it is a whole-grain food. Foods labeled as multi-grain, stone-ground, 100% wheat, cracked wheat, seven-grain or bran are usually not 100% whole grain products. Read the ingredients list on food packages so you can choose grain products that name a whole grain ingredient first on the list. Look for whole wheat, brown rice, bulgur, buckwheat, oatmeal, whole-grain cornmeal, whole oats, whole rye or wild rice. Selecting grain products based on the ingredients list makes it easy to get the recommended daily three one-ounce servings of whole grains from bread, breakfast cereal, baked goods, snacks, pasta, rice and other grains.

Try whole-wheat versions of food. For a change, try brown rice or whole-wheat pasta. Try brown rice stuffing in baked green peppers or tomatoes, and whole-wheat macaroni in macaroni and cheese. You may find it will take a little time to adjust to the new flavor and texture of these whole-wheat foods. Make a sandwich with one slice of white and one slice of whole wheat bread as you adjust to heartier flavor and texture.
Use whole grains in mixed dishes, such as barley in vegetable soup or stews and bulgur wheat in casseroles or stir-fries. Experiment with new grains such as quinoa, barley, kamut, bulgur and teff in place of white potatoes and white rice (go to www.wholegrainscouncil.org for more information.)

Experiment by substituting buckwheat, millet or oat flour for up to half of the flour in pancake, waffle, muffin or other flour-based recipes. You may also need to add a bit more leavening in order for them to rise properly.

Whole grains can be healthy snacks. Popcorn, a whole grain, can be a healthy snack. Make it with little or no added salt or butter. Also, try 100% whole-wheat or rye crackers.

Start slow when increasing how many whole grains you eat. A good starting goal is to choose a whole grain in place of the refined counterpart. Every small change will be a boost to your health.

Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information.

AA statement

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