

Health Awareness

A County Health Pool Publication



September, 2009

Whole Grains 101

When consumers were asked to pick the healthiest foods from a list of 70 foods and beverages generally considered good for you, whole grains topped the list and garnered fourth place, too. Whole grains scored (59.5%), followed by broccoli (57.6%), bananas (56.9%), oatmeal (56.1%) according to *Decision Analyst*, a marketing research and consulting services firm.

Whole grains are of mounting interest to the US shopper. Sixty-one percent of shoppers report boosting their intake of whole grains in the past two years since a 2007 report by a *HealthFocus Trend Report*, a national study of public attitudes and actions toward shopping and eating.

When asked about the specific benefits the majority of consumers associated whole grains with benefits related to cardiovascular disease, and intestinal health.

What IS a Whole Grain

Health experts advise everyone – men and women, young and old – that grains are a healthy necessity in every diet, and that it's important to eat at least half our grains as “whole grains.”



Whole grains include grains like wheat, corn, rice, oats, barley, quinoa, sorghum, spelt, rye – when these foods are eaten in their “whole” form. Whole grains even include popcorn!

You may already be eating whole grains. When you munch popcorn in the theater, or enjoy a bowl of hot oatmeal, you're probably focusing more on the delicious taste than on the fact that these foods are whole grains.

We are increasingly aware that fruits and vegetables contain disease-fighting phytochemicals and antioxidants, however whole grains have some valuable antioxidants not found in fruits and vegetables, as well as B vitamins, vitamin E, magnesium, iron and fiber.

Health Benefits of Whole Grains

The medical evidence is clear that whole grains reduce risks of heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and obesity. Few foods can offer such diverse benefits.

People who eat whole grains regularly have a lower risk of obesity, as measured by their body mass index and waist-to-hip ratios.



(Over)

Whole Grains 101 . . . (Continued)

They also have lower cholesterol levels.

Because of the phytochemicals and antioxidants, people who eat three daily servings of whole grains have been shown to reduce their risk of heart disease, stroke, Type II diabetes, digestive system cancers, and hormone-related cancers.

Help is On the Way

Even consumers who are aware of the health benefits of whole grains are often unsure how to find them and prepare them. If you'd like to know more about whole grains, here are just a few websites with good information on whole grains:

- Wheat Foods Council
- Kansas State University
- Breakfast Research Institute
- Whole Grains Council
- General Mills
- Kashi
- Quaker Oats

NPD Group, a global provider of consumer and retail market research information, has gathered data showing whole grain consumption in the decade from 1998 to 2008. The good news:

- Consumption overall rose 20% from 2005 to 2008, after remaining steady from 1998 to 2005.
- 18 to 34 year old's, as a group, increased the most, with consumption rising 38% from 2005 to 2008.
- 60% of Americans consumed at least one whole grain

Benefits Corner

Meeting Reminders

CHP Renewal Meeting will be held on September 24th, 2009 at CTSI.

Your CHP Benefits Administrator will begin the Fall Educational Training/ Open Enrollment in October. Check with your CHP Contact and/or www.ctsi.org to find the date they will be visiting your entity.

Who to Call Reminder

When calling any of the following, **REMEMBER**, to tell the customer service representative that you are covered through the County Health Pool.

Medical and Rx claims questions, benefit questions and to locate an in-network provider, contact our dedicated customer service unit at:

Anthem: 1-866-698-0087

Mail Order Rx claims questions: 1-800-962-8192

Dental claims and benefit questions: 1-800-627-0004

Vision claims and benefit questions: 1-800- 877-7195

Website Reminder

Anthem website: www.anthem.com

VSP website: www.vsp.com

CTSI website: www.ctsi.org (Download claim forms, benefits summaries, plan documents and FAQs')

The CHP staff is here to serve you. Please do not hesitate to contact us directly with any benefits and/or claims questions that you may have at

CTSI 303-861-0507

Meredith Burcham, CTSI Benefits Manager Ext 111

Amanda Duraes, CTSI Benefits Administrator Ext 131

Keenya Sisson, CTSI Benefits Administrator Ext 123

product during a typical two-week period in 2008, up from 35% in 2006.

The NPD Group data, however, also show that we still have a long way to go. Americans eat only about 11% of their grains as whole grains, despite government guidelines recommending that all of us make at least half our grains whole.

Consumers worldwide are beginning to understand the importance of enjoying more whole grains. To help you understand what whole grains are, learn how to identify whole grain products and find easy ways to enjoy more whole grains, consult the Whole Grains council.

Source: wholegrainscouncil.org