



NUTRITION TIPS

The Grain Group Whole Grain

Grain products are foods made from cereals like wheat, rice, oats and barley. Examples of these include bread, pasta and breakfast cereals. Grains are divided into two subgroups whole grains and refined grains.

A whole grain has all the healthy parts of a grain intact. It contains the bran, endosperm and the germ. The bran is the outer shell; it contains fibre, B-vitamins and trace minerals. The endosperm contains proteins and carbohydrates and is the part that provides nourishment to the seed. The endosperm is rich in vitamin E, fibre and B-vitamins.

Examples of whole grain foods include whole-wheat flour, whole corn meal and brown rice.

Nutrients and Benefits of Whole Grains

Grains are an important source of nutrients like fibre, B-vitamins and minerals. The dietary fibre in whole grains is important for proper bowel function and helps reduce constipation in children. Dietary fibre also helps reduce blood cholesterol level and thus lowers the risk to heart

diseases. The B-vitamins in whole grains help the body release energy from food and also keep the nervous system healthy.

It is good for you and your children to know how to distinguish whole grain products from refined ones. Generally, you can do this by reading food labels. For example, "whole bread" is made from refined grain, while "whole wheat bread" is made from whole grains.

Refined Grains

When whole grains are subjected to the modern milling method that removes the grain's germ and bran (which contain about 90% of the nutritional content), leaving only the endosperm (starch), the result is "refined" grain. Refined grain products are nutritionally imbalanced. This is because, although they are enriched with synthetic vitamins and chemical colourings and flavourings, they contain almost zero natural fibre, and insignificant amounts of vitamins and minerals. Some examples of refined grains include white flour, white bread and white rice. Bread, pies, cakes, cookies, biscuits and spaghetti are made from refined wheat and cannot supply children with all the

nutrients whole grain foods offer. Hence, it is better you give your children foods made from whole grain products like brown rice and whole wheat bread.

Breakfast Cereals For Children

Starting your children's day with a bowl of breakfast cereal is a wise choice because they stand to derive all the nutrients that will keep them at their best during the school hours from the cereal. This is because most breakfast cereals now come heavily fortified with an array of important vitamins and minerals. These breakfast cereals also come rich in carbohydrates and fibre to provide them with the physical and mental energy to go through the morning. Porridge is a good breakfast cereal since oats give a good amount of soluble fibre. When choosing breakfast cereal for your children, ensure that you choose the high fibre, low fat, salt and sugar ones; let your consideration for vitamins and minerals come secondary this time.

* For more information on child nutrition

Visit the Olu Akinkugbe Foundation
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Visiting Hours:
10:00 am - 12 noon and 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm.
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