

Words on Wellness

Your extension connection to nutrition and fitness

Whole Grains: Give Them the 3-step Test

Less than 5 percent of Americans consume the minimum recommended amount of whole grains. Although Americans generally eat enough total grains, most of the grains consumed are refined grains rather than whole grains. Unfortunately, many refined grain foods also are high in solid fats and added sugars. There is evidence that suggests whole grain intake may reduce the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer (e.g., colon) as well as help control body weight. Whole grains are a source of nutrients such as iron, magnesium, selenium, B vitamins, and dietary fiber. At least half of recommended total grain intake should be whole grains, which for many is about 3 ounce equivalents per day.

Not sure if a food is actually a whole grain? Use these three steps to help you decide:

1. Front of package—Check the front of the package for key terms such as “100% whole grain,” “whole oats,” “made with whole wheat.”

2. Ingredients—Read the list of ingredients; one of the first three should contain key terms such as “100% whole wheat,” “whole wheat flour,” “whole oats,” or “brown rice.”

3. Extra claims and logos—Examine the other panels for extra whole grain health claims or whole grain stamps/symbols that will support your decision.

A new publication *Whole Grains* (FAM 12) is available at the ISU Extension and Outreach store <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/> (Enter the publication number FAM 12 in the search box on the top of the page.) *Whole Grains* includes a wide variety of information about whole grains including how to use some of the newer whole grains such as quinoa, teef, and steel cut oats. An extensive whole grain chart includes nutritional and cooking information on many whole grains.

Storing Whole Grains Safely

Because whole grains retain their healthful oils, they are more susceptible to oxidation and need to be stored to prevent deterioration. Heat, light, and air can trigger oxidation of the oil in the germ of whole grains.

If you're shopping in the bulk section, don't be afraid to sniff the grains, which should have a light sweet scent or no scent at all. If the bin smells oily or moldy, the grains may be rancid.

Once you bring your whole grain home, store it directly in the refrigerator or freezer. You can either keep it in its unopened package or transfer it into an airtight container or plastic zip-top bag.



(Continued on back)



Skillet Lasagna

Serves: 8 (Serving size: 1 cup)

Ingredients

- ½ pound ground beef
- ½ onion, chopped (about ½ cup)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced or ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- 3 cups spaghetti or pasta sauce (26 to 28 ounces)
- 1 cup water
- 8 ounces whole wheat noodles or whole wheat rotini
- 1 (10-ounce) package chopped spinach, thawed
- 1 (12-ounce) container lowfat cottage cheese
- ½ cup (4 ounces) shredded mozzarella cheese

Optional: fresh or canned, drained sliced mushrooms

Directions

1. Wash hands.
2. Cook ground beef, onions, and garlic together in a large skillet or electric fry pan; stir to prevent sticking. When ground beef has turned brown, transfer mixture to a colander set over a bowl and rinse with hot water to remove grease. Return mixture to skillet.
3. Add spaghetti sauce and water to skillet and bring to a boil.
4. Add uncooked noodles, stir, cover with lid, turn down the heat, and cook 5 minutes.
5. Squeeze the thawed spinach with your clean hands to remove the juice and then stir into the pan. Add mushrooms if you like. Cover and simmer 5 minutes.
6. Spoon cottage cheese over the top. Sprinkle with mozzarella cheese, put the lid on and let it heat another 5 to 10 minutes until heated through and noodles are tender.

Nutrient information per serving

250 calories, 6 g total fat, 30 mg cholesterol, 540 mg sodium, 30 g carbohydrate, 3 g dietary fiber, 22 g protein.

Recipe available at

www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings/

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(Storing Grains continued)

Since different grains vary in fat content (from about 1.7% for wheat to about 6.9% for oats), the shelf life of the flours made from them varies. In general, most whole grain flours keep well in the refrigerator for 2-3 months, and in the freezer for 6-8 months. It is recommended to keep flour in a sealed container to prevent picking up stray odors and tastes from the refrigerator or freezer.

Grains, because their oil is sealed in the original grain kernel and cannot easily oxidize, can keep much longer than flour. Most will keep for several months in a room-temperature cupboard, and for a year in the freezer. Commercially processed whole grain products such as breads, crackers, and pasta are commercially processed to be shelf stable and can be stored in the same manner as those that are not whole grain. General advice on grains and flour: try to buy what you'll use in 2-3 months.

Safe Storage, Grain by Grain

Whole Wheat Flour – airtight seal, freezer, 6 months

Oats – airtight seal, freezer, 3 months

Oat Flour – airtight seal, freezer, 2 months

Cornmeal – airtight seal, freezer 4-6 months

Kernels or Popcorn – airtight seal, freezer, 1 year

Rye Flour – airtight seal, freezer, 6 months

Spelt Flour – airtight seal, freezer, 6 months

Buckwheat Flour – airtight seal, freezer, 2 months

Barley Flour – airtight seal, freezer, 4 months

Brown Rice – airtight seal, cupboard, 5-6 months; freezer, up to a year

Brown Rice Flour – airtight seal, refrigerator, 4-5 months; freezer, up to a year



Dance Like the Stars!

Have the dance competition television shows inspired you to get up and move? You don't have to be a professional dancer, a celebrity, or even someone who knows how to do any special dance moves to get health benefits from dance.

Dancing provides a workout for both the body and the mind. Researchers have learned that regular physical activity generally can help your body, including your brain, stay healthy as you age. Exercise increases the level of brain chemicals that encourage nerve cells to grow. And dancing that requires you to remember dance step sequences boosts brainpower by improving memory skills.

Research suggests that ballroom dancing at least twice a week made people less likely to develop dementia. It also has been shown that some people with Alzheimer's disease are able to recall forgotten memories when they dance to music they used to know.

Other benefits of dance include:

- strengthen bones and muscles without hurting your joints
- improve your posture and balance
- increase your stamina and flexibility
- reduce stress and tension
- burn calories (150-pound person burns 150 calories in 30 minutes)



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So, tonight when you consider settling down for a little television, do a little boogie instead!