

# Building Healthy Meals with WIC Foods: Whole Grains

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**Who:** Adult participants and caregivers of children

**Why:** It is recommended we make half of the grains we eat whole grains. This lesson will educate participants on the importance of making half your grains whole as part of a healthy diet.

Nevada WIC participants want meals and snack ideas using WIC foods. This lesson will provide participants with meals and snack ideas for using WIC foods to increase whole grain intake.

**Time:** 20 minutes

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**Objectives:** By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Identify two examples of whole grain foods, including those offered through WIC
- Identify a whole grain food from the ingredient list on the Nutrition Facts food label
- List one way to incorporate more whole grains into their family's meals and snacks

## Lesson

**Overview:**

1. Introduction
2. Concept: Examples of whole grain foods
3. Concept: Identifying whole grain products
4. Concept: Simple Ways for Families to Add Whole Grains
5. Closing

**Materials:** Provided by WIC State:

- Handheld Poster: Examples of Whole Grains
- Food Labels for Grains
- Handout: Seven Ways to Eat More Whole Grains
- Incentive: MyPlate Preschool Plastic Plate

Provided by Local Agency:

- Whole Grains Council – Whole Grain Cooking Tips  
<https://wholegrainscouncil.org/resources>

## Introduction

- Welcome participants
- Give overview of class session
- Introductions
  - Include children in the introductions activity

**Example:** "Hello everybody! Welcome to 'Building Healthy Meals with WIC Foods' class. This class talks about the whole grain foods - how you can tell what a whole grain is and how to add more whole grains to your family's diet. The class is about 20 minutes long and we will use this time to share some ideas. Let's introduce ourselves. I'll start: my name is \_\_\_\_\_"

- 🖐️ **Icebreaker:** "Let's go around the room and please share your name, your child's name, and something you have heard about whole grains."
  - Allow time for participants to respond. Provide whole grain health benefits.

### FACTS ABOUT WHOLE GRAIN FOODS:

- Whole grains provide many nutrients, including **dietary fiber**, **several B vitamins**, and **minerals**. Whole grains may reduce the risk of **heart disease**, **reduce constipation**, help with **weight management** and **prevent neural tube defects** during fetal development.
- **Dietary fiber** helps reduce GI issues and may help reduce the risk of heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and some cancers.
- **B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin)** found in whole grains play a key role in metabolism and are essential for a healthy nervous system. **Folate** is an important nutrient for women on child-bearing age because it reduces the risk of neural tube defects.
- Whole grains are a major source of **iron**, which helps carry oxygen in the blood. Inadequate iron intake may result in iron-deficiency anemia.
- Whole grains are a good source of **magnesium** and **selenium**, important in building healthy bones and a healthy immune system.



Source: <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/grains-nutrients-health>

### Concept: Examples of Whole Grain Foods

- **Activity:**

"Let's look at examples of whole grain foods. This poster provides pictures of different whole grains. The whole grain foods WIC provides include corn tortillas, whole wheat bread, brown rice and oats. WIC also offers whole wheat tortillas."

- Ask participants to identify which foods on the poster they bought within the past month by asking them to raise their hands.
- After participants have identified the whole grain foods they bought, point out the grains that were most commonly bought.

"Looks like many of you bought ... Would anyone like to share what they made with the whole grains they bought?"

- Affirm answers from participants

### WHOLE GRAIN FOODS

- Amaranth, brown rice, buckwheat, bulgur, kamut, millet, muesli, oatmeal, popcorn, quinoa, rolled oats, spelt, teff, whole grain barley, whole grain cornmeal, whole grain sorghum, whole rye, whole wheat bread, whole wheat cereal flakes, whole wheat crackers, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat sandwich buns/rolls, whole wheat tortilla, wild rice.

## Concept: Identifying Whole Grain Products

- **Activity:**

"Let's practice how to choose whole grain foods. We're going to look at some ingredient labels on food packages to see if we can figure out if the food is a whole grain. Let's start with the bread labels."

- Hand out the food labels

Ask, "Let's look at the ingredients of both breads. The one that has whole wheat flour listed as the first ingredient is the whole grain. Foods with enriched flour are not whole grain because enriched flour has some but not all of the vitamins and minerals that whole grain foods have. So, when reading food labels, the first ingredient must have the word "whole" in the name to be considered a whole grain."

- Repeat activity with the cereal and tortilla labels
- Ask for volunteers to identify which is the whole grain food

"What questions do you have?"

- Collect labels

### **FACTS ABOUT IDENTIFYING WHOLE GRAIN PRODUCTS:**

- A whole grain is made up of 3 parts and each part contains important nutrients. When grains are "refined" or "processed" these parts are separated and many important nutrients are lost
- Food packages sometimes try to trick us into thinking a product is made from whole grains when it is not. To identify a food product that is mostly whole grains, the first ingredient must have a "whole" in the name or check for the Whole Grain Council stamp. For example, "wheat flour" is not a whole grain.



## Concept: Simple Ways for Families to Add Whole Grains

"To help you and your family eat more whole grain foods, WIC offers whole grain breads, brown rice, corn and whole wheat tortillas. Let's explore different ways to add more of the grains into your family's diet."

- Offer "Seven Ways to Eat More Whole Grains" Handout
- Offer "Whole Grains Council Cooking & Eating Whole Grains" to participants who express interest in knowing how to cook different whole grains

- **Activity:**

"Health professionals recommend making half of the grains you and your family eat whole grains. The easiest way to do this is to make as many of the grain foods you eat whole grains. Let's take a minute to look over this handout."

- Review the handout

"Can anyone think of more ways to add more whole grains to their diet?"

### **SIMPLE WAYS TO ADD WHOLE GRAINS:**

- Make simple switches by substituting a whole-grain product for a refined-grain product. For example, eat 100% whole-wheat bread instead of white bread or bagels, or brown rice instead of white rice.
- 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.
- Save some time by cooking extra brown rice or whole-wheat pasta. Refrigerate half to heat and serve later in the week as a quick side dish.
- Use whole grains in mixed dishes, such as barley in vegetable soups or stews and bulgur wheat in casseroles or stir-fries.

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips-make-half-your-whole-grains-whole#sthash.KGOGhpE1.dpuf>



### **Closing**

- **Summarize what was covered in class:**

"Today we talked about the difference between whole grain and refined grains, provided examples of whole grain foods and whole grain foods you can buy with WIC benefits. We also talked about ways you and your family can add more whole grain foods to your diet."

- **Assist participants with setting a nutrition goal:**

"Thinking about what was talked about in class today, name one thing you think you can start doing to add more whole grains into your family's diet."

- **Thank participants for their participation**

"It was really great having you here today. Thank you very much for your participation in class and I hope you are able to use some of the information we shared today. I look forward to seeing you again!"