



UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA

Agriculture & Natural Resources

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION • SAN JOAQUIN COUNTY

420 South Wilson Way, Stockton CA 95205-6299 Telephone: (209) 468-2085
Fax: (209) 462-5181 Web: <http://cesanjoaquin.ucdavis.edu>



NEWS RELEASE

By Diane Metz
Nutrition, Family and Consumer Sciences Advisor
UCCE Solano County

November 2001

A WHOLE "GRAIN" OF TRUTH

Eating more whole grain foods? Good decision! Whole grains are higher in dietary fiber and nutrients than refined grains, and can play an important role in lowering cancer risk and improving health. Sometimes, however, some detective work is needed to actually find those whole grain products. Take whole grain bread, for example. Consumers consider brown breads to be more healthful. But you will find brown breads on the supermarket shelves that are not actually whole grain foods. Some bread is brown because of caramel coloring or molasses is added to the recipe, but they are actually made mostly of refined flour or "enriched flour." The same goes for many "seven grain" breads.

To find bread that is truly made with whole-grain wheat, read the ingredient list. The words "whole wheat flour" or "100 percent whole wheat flour" should be listed first. Even if some refined flour is used, there is more whole grain flour than in this product than any other ingredient. You can find whole grain cereals in much the same way. The ingredient list begins with a "whole" grain such as whole wheat, whole oats, whole barley, etc.

Impressed by the banners across packages proclaiming "made with whole grain?" Again, look at the list of ingredients. Is "whole wheat flour" listed first? The manufacturer may have added some whole grains to make this claim for the product, but the amounts may be so small that there is minimal difference in nutritional value.

Looking for some whole grains to serve at dinner instead of basic white rice or pasta? Try bulgur, quick cooking brown rice, barley, kasha, millet or quinoa. They are available in supermarkets and whole foods stores. Many grain products are mistakenly thought to be whole grain, such as couscous or spinach pasta.

Finally, remember that whole grains can boost the nutritional value of many recipes. You can add oatmeal to cookie recipes, substitute whole-wheat flour for some of the refined flour in muffins or other quick breads, and stir in barley to soups and stews.

Source: Adapted from AICR newsletter; Issue 71; Spring 2001, page 9.