Putting MyPlate on Your Table: Grains

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MyPlate, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) food guidance system, helps individuals use the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans to make smart choices from every food group. MyPlate includes an interactive, online guide that provides individuals with recommended food amounts to eat, based on gender, age and physical activity level. Personalized guides and other resources can be found at choosemyplate.gov.

This fact sheet provides an introduction to the grains food group.

Why Grains?
Grains provide energy, fiber, iron and B vitamins.

Which Foods Are in the Grains Group?
Foods in the grains group are made from rice, wheat, oats, cornmeal, barley or other cereal grains. Examples of grain products are bread, pasta, crackers, tortillas, rice, breakfast cereal and oatmeal.

How Much Is Needed From the Grains Group?
This chart shows the USDA’s daily recommendation for grain intake, with at least half of those being whole grains.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2–3 years old</th>
<th>4–8 years old</th>
<th>3-ounce equivalents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>9–13 years old</td>
<td>14–18 years old</td>
<td>5-ounce equivalents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>9–13 years old</td>
<td>14–18 years old</td>
<td>6-ounce equivalents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>19–50 years old</td>
<td>51+ years old</td>
<td>6-ounce equivalents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>19–30 years old</td>
<td>31–50 years old</td>
<td>8-ounce equivalents</td>
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Note these 1-ounce equivalents:
- 1 slice of bread
- ½ cup cooked rice
- ½ cup cooked oatmeal
- ½ cup cooked pasta
- 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal
- 3 cups air-popped popcorn
- 1 mini bagel
- 4–6 crackers
- 1 small tortilla (6-inch)

Make at Least Half of Your Grains Whole.
Grains are divided into two subgroups: whole grains and refined grains.
Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel: the bran (fiber-rich), germ (nutrient-rich) and endosperm (carbohydrate-rich). Refined grains are milled, removing the bran and germ. Refining gives grains a finer texture and improves shelf life, but it also removes healthy vitamins and fiber.

When choosing whole grains, look for product labels that state “100% whole wheat” or “100% whole grain.”
You can also look for grain products that have “whole wheat” or “whole grain” listed first on the ingredient list. This is a good indicator that the product contains mostly whole grains.

Examples of whole grain foods include:

- whole-wheat or whole-rye bread
- whole-wheat pasta
- whole-wheat or whole-grain crackers
- oatmeal
- brown rice
- popcorn

References

