



The Importance of Grains in School Nutrition

Whole grain-rich foods like waffles, toaster pastries, cereal bars, and crackers are a big hit with kids – they're quick, convenient, and delicious. But did you know that whole and enriched grains also support healthier lifestyles in children and adolescents?^{1,2} Learn more about the benefits of whole and enriched grains below to help your students reach their greatest potential.

WHOLE & ENRICHED GRAINS PROVIDE A TOP-NOTCH TEAM OF NUTRIENTS KIDS NEED TO THRIVE.

Grain-based foods are important sources of carbohydrates—which our bodies use for energy—plus key nutrients like iron, zinc, and B vitamins.³

GRAINS ARE THE PERFECT PARTNER FOR PERFECT PAIRINGS.

Grains are a great starting point for meals and can serve as a vehicle for other food groups and nutrients.⁵

WHOLE GRAINS HELP SUPPORT LONG-TERM HEALTH OUTCOMES.

Research suggests that higher whole grain intake is associated with a lower risk of several nutrition-related chronic diseases later in life.²

DID YOU KNOW?

Grain-based foods contribute nearly 55% of all fiber consumed in the United States!⁴

DID YOU KNOW?

Higher whole grain intake has been associated with improved cognitive function in kids and teens!⁶

DID YOU KNOW?

Children's diets were more whole-grain dense in 2013–2018 than in 1994–2010 due largely to implementation of updated school meal nutrition standards.⁷

MAKE GRAINS A STANDARD IN SCHOOL MEALS

When involved parents, dedicated cafeteria managers, and innovative foodservice suppliers work together, greatness is always on the menu! Let's help put our students on the path to a brighter future with nourishing, nutrient-rich grains in every meal.



¹ Jakobsen DD, et al. Association between food, beverages, and overweight/obesity in children and adolescents – a systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies. *Nutrients*. 2023;15:764. ² Zong G, Gao A, Hu FB, Sun Q. Whole Grain Intake and Mortality From All Causes, Cardiovascular Disease, and Cancer: A Meta-Analysis of Prospective Cohort Studies. *Circulation*. 2016 Jun 14;133(24):2370-80. ³ Papanikolaou Y and Fulgoni III VL. Certain grain foods can be meaningful contributors to nutrient density in the diets of U.S. children and adolescents: data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 2009–2012. *Nutrients*. 2017;9(160). ⁴ Kranz S, Dodd KW, Juan WY, Johnson LK, Jahns L. Whole Grains Contribute Only a Small Proportion of Dietary Fiber to the U.S. Diet. *Nutrients*. 2017 Feb 17;9(2):153. ⁵ Produce for Better Health Hacks to Habits Research, 2022. ⁶ Cohen JFW, et al. The effect of healthy dietary consumption on executive cognitive functioning in children and adolescents: a systematic review. *British Journal of Nutrition*. 2016;116:989-1000. ⁷ Zong G, Gao A, Hu FB, Sun Q. Whole Grain Intake and Mortality From All Causes, Cardiovascular Disease, and Cancer: A Meta-Analysis of Prospective Cohort Studies. *Circulation*. 2016 Jun 14;133(24):2370-80. ⁸ <https://www.ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2023/september/children-were-only-age-group-improving-whole-grain-intakes-school-foods-are-a-key-factor>