

Handout 2.1: HealthierUS School Challenge Whole-Grains Resource

This resource outlines the HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSCC) whole-grains criteria and offers additional background information to help school food authorities (SFAs) identify whole-grain products and offer them more frequently in their menus. Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has updated this resource to reflect the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGAs), which recommend that children and adults consume at least half of their grains as whole grains. These criteria are not required for school meal programs; they apply only for those elementary schools that submit an application for a HealthierUS School Challenge award.

HUSCC Whole-Grain Criteria:

- **Gold/Gold of Distinction**
At least one serving of a whole-grain food must be offered each day in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
- **Bronze/Silver**
At least one serving of a whole-grain food must be offered three (3) or more times (days) per week in the NSLP.

Whole-grain food is defined as “whole grain as the primary ingredient by weight,” (i.e., whole grain listed first in the ingredient statement). Serving is defined by the *USDA Food Buying Guide*.

How Can Schools Comply With the HUSCC Whole-Grain Criteria?

FNS realizes that some schools may face challenges in finding products that meet the criteria above. Menu planners should count whole grains to meet the criteria as follows:

1. For a Bronze or Silver Award, a whole-grain food must be offered at least 3 days per week. For Gold or Gold Award of Distinction, a whole-grain food must be offered every day. Menu planners are encouraged to serve a variety of whole-grain foods and may not serve the same whole-grain product every day to count for the HUSCC criteria.
2. Whole-grain food products must be at least the portion size of one Grains/Breads serving as defined in the *USDA Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*.
3. Whole-grain foods that meet the HUSCC criteria are categorized into two groups:

Group A: Food products with whole grain(s) as the primary ingredient by weight

Group B: Food products with whole grain(s) as the primary *grain* ingredient by weight

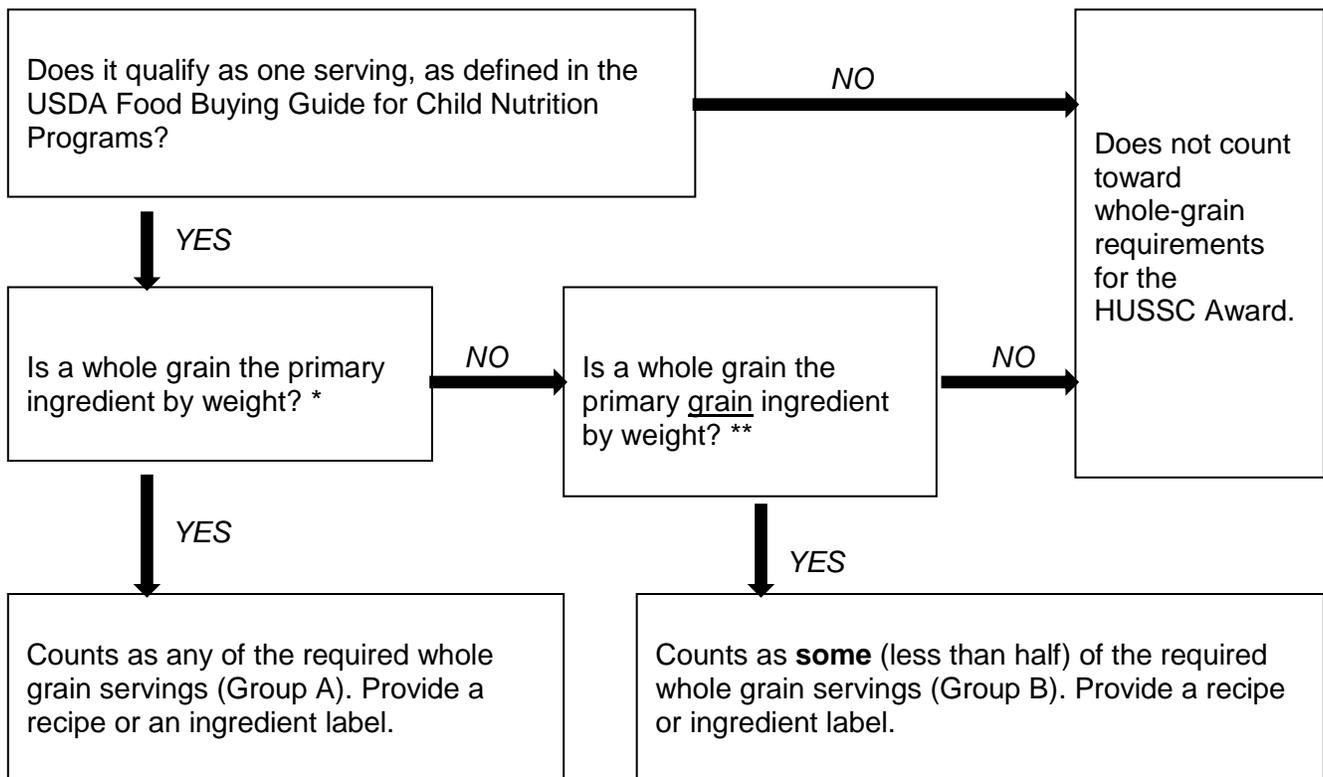
When a school-made recipe contains multiple whole grains, it will qualify under Group A if the total weight of the whole grains is more than the weight of any other ingredient. A recipe will qualify under Group B if the total weight of whole grains is more than the weight of the primary grain ingredient. The same principle applies to purchased products that contain multiple grains. Use Attachment B for required documentation for multiple-grain products.

- Whole-grain products from Group A must be the majority of whole-grain foods offered each week. For example, for a Gold or Gold of Distinction award, a food product meeting Group A would need to be offered 3 or more days each week; and for a Bronze/Silver award, 2 or more days each week. A whole-grain food from Group B may be counted as a whole-grain food for the remainder of the days in each week. Foods from Group A may be used to meet all the required Grains/Breads.

How Do I Know If a Whole-Grain Product Meets HUSSC Criteria?

There are many foods labeled as whole grains, such as pizza crusts, buns, breads, tortillas, and other products. It is helpful to know which products meet the HUSSC criteria. The chart below will assist you in determining if your whole-grain product meets the HUSSC criteria.

HealthierUS School Challenge Criteria for Whole-Grain Products



* Includes products with a total whole-grain weight that exceeds the weight of any other ingredient.
 ** Includes products with a total whole-grain weight that exceeds the weight of the primary refined grain ingredient.

What is a Whole Grain?

Whole grains consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel. The kernel has three parts—the bran, the germ, and the endosperm. Usually the kernel is cracked, crushed, or flaked during the milling process. If the finished product retains the same relative proportions of bran, germ, and endosperm as the original grain, it is considered a whole grain.

When you see the following words, you will know that, by regulation (Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Standards of Identity), they describe whole grains that are used as ingredients:

- Cracked wheat
- Crushed wheat
- Whole-wheat flour
- Graham flour
- Entire-wheat flour
- Bromated whole-wheat flour
- Whole durum wheat flour

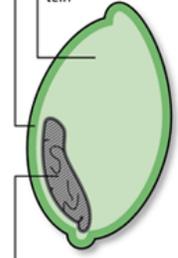
Whole grain kernel

Bran

"Outer shell" protects seed
Fiber, B vitamins, trace minerals

Endosperm

Provides energy
Carbohydrates, protein



Germ

Nourishment for the seed
Antioxidants, vitamin E, B-vitamins

Common and usual names for other whole grains are noted below:

- The word *whole* listed before a grain, for example, *whole* corn
- The words *berries* and *groats* are also used to designate whole grains, for example, wheat berries or oat groats
- Rolled oats and oatmeal (including old-fashioned, quick-cooking, and instant oatmeal)
- Other whole-grain products that do not use the word “whole” in their description, for example, brown rice, brown rice flour, or wild rice

A more comprehensive list of whole grains is provided as Attachment A.

Grain products (ingredients) that are not whole grains:

Flour has been designated by the FDA as the term for refined wheat flour. The following ingredients are not whole grains:

flour
white flour
wheat flour
all-purpose flour
unbleached flour
bromated flour
enriched bromated flour
enriched flour
instantized flour

phosphated flour
self-rising flour
self-rising wheat flour
enriched self-rising flour
bread flour
cake flour
durum flour
corn grits

hominy grits
hominy
farina
semolina
degerminated corn meal
enriched rice
rice flour
couscous

Grain products that may or may not be whole-grain:

- “Pot” or “Scotch” barley and “pearl” or “pearled” barley are *not* whole grains because bran has been removed. Look for the words whole barley or whole-grain barley on the product label or in the ingredient statement. However, the FDA has recognized that “dehulled barley” is a whole grain.
- “Stone ground” does not necessarily mean that the product is whole-grain. “Stone ground” describes the process used for making the flour or meal. Look for “whole” in combination with “stone ground” in the ingredient statement.
- Whole corn “treated with lime” (often used in tortilla products, and may be called “masa”) would only be a whole grain if documentation from the manufacturer indicates that the manufacturing process used to prepare the corn with lime retains the pericarp, or bran layer.
- When a grain name, such as corn, oats, or rye flour, is listed in the ingredient statement, but no descriptor (such as “whole grain” for corn or “brown” for rice) is listed, the SFA needs to obtain further documentation from the manufacturer before purchasing the food product to meet the HUSSC criteria.

How Do I Purchase Whole-Grain Products or Develop Whole-Grain Product Descriptions (Specifications)?

Use the following information to guide your decisions.

- A. Whole grains as the primary ingredient by weight of the product.** Specify that a whole grain will be the first ingredient on the ingredient label or the primary ingredient by weight. Ask that food product labels and ingredient statements be submitted with the vendor’s bid on whole-grain products. If the first ingredient is not a whole grain, and there are multiple whole grains in the ingredient list, request documentation from the manufacturer as to the weight of the first ingredient and the total weight of all of the whole-grain ingredients. If the total weight of the whole-grain ingredients is greater than the weight of the first ingredient, the food product would meet Group A.
- B. Whole grains as the primary *grain* ingredients of the product.** Specify that a whole grain be the first grain ingredient of the product. Ask that food product labels and ingredient statements be submitted with the vendor’s bid on whole-grain products. If the first grain ingredient is not a whole grain but there are multiple whole-grain ingredients in the product, require the manufacturer to complete a product formulation statement documenting the weight of the first (refined) grain ingredient and the total weight of the whole grains. If the total weight of the whole-grain ingredients is greater than the weight of the first grain ingredient, the food product would meet Group B.
 - **Flour blends of whole-grain and enriched flours**—Some manufacturers make products using a specialty blend of two or more flours that is part whole grain and part refined flour. In this case, the manufacturer must provide documentation to show that the primary grains in the product are whole grains to meet Group B.

Regardless of the type of whole-grain food purchased, ensure in your specification that the serving size of the whole-grain food is equal to a serving of Grains/Bread as defined in the *Food Buying Guide*, pages 3.15-3.16.

Looking at the Whole Product:

Before purchasing new products containing whole grains, look carefully at the whole product, not just the whole grains. In keeping with the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) recommendations, SFAs should offer whole-grain products that are low in sugars and/or fat. The goal is to offer nutritious whole-grain foods that students can enjoy. Including a dessert on a limited basis as an element of a reimbursable meal can have the positive effect of increasing acceptance and encouraging children to more fully participate in the meal service. We do not support using dessert items to meet the bread requirement in every meal, but we do acknowledge the benefit on occasion.

Storing Whole Grains:

As with all foods, use FIFO (First In, First Out) principles when storing whole grains. Because whole-grain ingredients (e.g., whole-wheat flour, brown rice) retain the bran and the oil-rich germ, these items may turn rancid when stored in warm areas. To increase the shelf life, store these products in a cool, dry place in airtight containers. If the whole-grain products will not be used within a short period of time, they should be stored in the refrigerator or freezer.

Taste-Testing of Whole-Grain Products:

Some students may not be familiar with whole-grain products. To encourage them to try different products, schools can have student taste tests to select products that have the most student appeal. By documenting the taste tests and student preferences, SFAs may develop a list of approved whole-grain products for purchase.

Introduce whole grains in student favorites, such as pizza or spaghetti, and gradually increase the amount of whole grains in recipes over the school year as students adapt to the changes.

Ideas for Adding Whole Grains to Menus in Child Nutrition Programs:

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| Whole-grain ready-to-eat cereals | Whole-grain crackers or cookies |
| Whole-grain cooked breakfast cereals | Whole-grain side dishes (e.g., brown rice, wild rice, cracked wheat, whole-grain bulgur or barley, whole specialty grains) |
| Granola made from whole grains | Whole-wheat pasta, such as macaroni, spaghetti, vermicelli, or whole-grain noodles |
| Whole-grain cereal or granola bars | Whole-grain salads (cracked wheat, whole-grain bulgur, whole specialty grains) |
| Whole-grain pancakes or waffles | Other uses of whole grains (soups, casseroles, combination dishes) |
| Whole-grain bagels or muffins | Soba noodles (with whole buckwheat flour as primary ingredient) |
| Whole-wheat breads, rolls, or buns | |
| Other whole-grain breads, rolls, or buns | |
| Whole-grain tortillas, taco shells | |
| Whole-grain chips/pretzels | |
| Whole-grain pita pockets | |
| Whole-grain cornbread | |

Attachment A: List of Common Whole Grains

While this list is extensive, it is NOT comprehensive and therefore may not contain all possible representations of whole-grain ingredient names on food labels.

WHEAT (RED) – the most common kind of wheat in the U.S.

- wheat berries
- whole-grain wheat
- cracked wheat or crushed wheat
- whole-wheat flour
- bromated whole-wheat flour
- stone ground whole-wheat flour
- toasted crushed whole wheat
- whole-wheat pastry flour
- graham flour
- entire wheat flour
- whole durum flour
- whole durum wheat flour
- whole-wheat flakes
- sprouted wheat
- sprouted wheat berries
- bulgur (cracked wheat)
- whole bulgur
- whole-grain bulgur

WHEAT (WHITE)

- whole white wheat
- whole white wheat flour

OATS

- whole oats
- oat groats
- oatmeal or rolled oats
- whole-oat flour

BARLEY

- whole barley
- whole-grain barley
- whole-barley flakes
- whole-barley flour
- whole-grain barley flour
- dehulled barley
- dehulled-barley flour

CORN

- whole corn
- whole-corn flour
- whole-grain corn flour
- whole-grain cornmeal
- whole cornmeal
- whole-grain grits

BROWN RICE

- brown rice
- brown-rice flour

WILD RICE

- wild rice
- wild-rice flour

RYE

- whole rye
- rye berries
- whole-rye flour
- whole-rye flakes

LESS COMMON GRAINS: to be whole grains, “whole” must be listed before the grain name.

- einkorn
- Kamut[®]
- emmer (farro)
- teff
- triticale
- spelt
- buckwheat
- amaranth
- sorghum (milo)
- millet
- quinoa