



## **CHALLENGE:**

*Include whole, intact grains in your diet every day*

The USDA recommends that adults consume roughly 6 ounces of grains each day. Because the quality of grains and grain products varies greatly, following this recommendation can either lead to a well-nourished diet or to a high-calorie, low-nutrient diet. To help clear things up, here's a breakdown of the different types of grain products you'll find at the store:

**Refined Grains:** Refined grains have the bran and germ layers removed during processing. Only the endosperm remains, which mostly is comprised of refined starch. Refined grains have a high glycemic load and therefore are rapidly absorbed into the bloodstream. Examples include white breads and pasta, crackers, baked goods, white flour, and breakfast cereals.

**Whole Grains:** Whole grains, or foods made from them, contain all the essential parts of the grain seed; in other words, they contain 100% of the original kernel, which includes the bran, germ, and endosperm. Milled whole grains go through a process in which the bran, endosperm, and germ layers are milled into a fine flour to make whole grain pasta, breakfast cereals, and breads.

**Intact Grains:** Intact grains are grains straight from the plant, but with their husks removed. All three of the kernel layers must be intact to be considered an "intact" grain. These grains are easily identifiable as they look like a grain: oats, barley, brown rice, quinoa, faro, millet, etc.

### ***WHICH GRAINS ARE BEST?***

The USDA recommends that at least half of your grain intake should come from whole grains instead of refined grains. Nutritionists recommend we reduce our intake of refined grains even more, reserving them only for special occasions. This is because refined grains are quickly digested into simple sugars and absorbed into your bloodstream, causing blood sugar levels to spike and quickly crash. Diets high in refined grains have been linked to type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and obesity.

Intact grains, on the other hand, contain a richer nutritional profile of antioxidants, B vitamins, protein, minerals, fiber, and healthful fats than grains that have been stripped of the bran and germ layers through processing. The high fiber content of intact grains slows their digestions, reducing blood sugar spikes and increasing satiety.

When you hear recommendations to include more “whole grains” in your diet, they actually mean “intact grains.” We’re not sure why, but our bodies react to processed whole grain products more like refined grain products than they do intact grains. In general, processing changes a grain’s calorie density and glycemic load. The calorie density of a processed whole grain product (e.g. whole wheat bread) is similar to that of white bread, and final product of a milled or refined grain has a much higher glycemic load than its intact whole grain counterpart.

#### *WHAT ABOUT DIETS THAT AVOID GRAINS COMPLETELY?*

Some popular diets like the Paleo Diet recommend avoiding grains completely. Some people have experienced benefit from cutting grains out of their diet and that’s perfectly fine. Luckily, grains are not essential to a nutritious diet as they don’t contain any unique nutrients that we can’t get from other foods. For most people though, switching from refined grains to intact grains will dramatically reduce disease risk and provide a sustainable source of carbohydrates.

#### **HOW TO INCLUDE INTACT GRAINS IN YOUR DIET:**

- Add wild rice or brown rice to your favorite soup
- Add  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup uncooked oats for each pound of ground beef or turkey when making meatballs, burgers, or meatloaf
- Make brown or wild rice pilaf as a side dish
- Enjoy whole grain salads made with bulgur or quinoa
- Mix quinoa with roasted vegetables for a side dish or serve with an egg for breakfast

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Month Completed\_\_\_\_\_

### Harker School Wellness Program / **Whole Grains Challenge**

Track the number servings of whole/intact grains and refined grains you consume daily. Aim to keep your refined grain consumption to no more than 1-2 servings a week. Submit completed log to HR to earn 10 wellness points. (100 points max in this category)

#### Week 1

Day 1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 5 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 6 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 7 \_\_\_\_\_

#### Week 2

Day 8 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 9 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 10 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 11 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 12 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 13 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 14 \_\_\_\_\_

#### Week 3

Day 15 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 16 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 17 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 18 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 19 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 20 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 21 \_\_\_\_\_

#### Week 4

Day 22 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 23 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 24 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 25 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 26 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 27 \_\_\_\_\_  
Day 28 \_\_\_\_\_

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

I, the employee named above, guarantee that the information contained in this verification is true and accurate and I understand that HR may verify any forms submitted for the purpose of obtaining a wellness discount. I understand that any inaccurate and/or false statements on this form may lead to the loss of all or a portion of my wellness discount.

**To receive credit, this form must be submitted to HR within 30 days of completion and no later than December 5, 2019.**