

# Food Pyramid Emphasizes Grains

DENVER, Colo — The Wheat Foods Council today endorsed the USDA's selection of the Food Guide Pyramid as the graphic to convey the types and amounts of foods Americans should consume on a daily basis.

The guidelines call for Americans to consume six to 11 servings from the bread, cereal, rice and pasta group on a daily basis, a significant change from the old guidelines, which called for only four servings of grain products.

"The graphic shows Americans that we need to restore grains — the bread, cereal, rice and pasta group — to their historic place as the staff of life," commented Judi Adams, M.S., R.D., executive director of the Wheat Foods Council. "We're being told to increase consumption of some of the foods we enjoy most.

"To date, much of the discussion has focused on what we need to eliminate from the diet," explained Adams. "This can be

very discouraging to consumers, many of whom believe eating right means giving up favorite foods.

"There is a very positive, powerful message in this," Adams explained. "Consumers are being urged to consume more of certain foods — foods we do fine enjoyable, like fruits, vegetables, bread, pasta and other grain products.

"Americans need to learn how to identify grain foods and the important role they play in the diet, gain some understanding of serving sizes, and see how easy it is to incorporate these guidelines into practical, everyday terms."

A Gallup poll conducted for the Wheat Foods Council revealed, for example, that Americans don't know their grains. "Unfortunately," commented Adams, "our research found that Americans no longer recognize wheat foods when they see them." The poll revealed that 49 percent of Americans could not correctly identify

white bread as a wheat food. And, 48 percent incorrectly identified oatmeal as a wheat.

Grain products are a valuable source of energizing complex carbohydrates, which play an important role in a healthy diet. Increasing one's intake of grains can actually help displace unwanted fat calories while also giving a sense of fullness and satisfaction.

Consumers can eat more of many foods they like, from pasta to hard pretzels, while keeping total daily calorie intake intact. "It becomes much more manageable," Adams explained, "when serving sizes are put into perspective." A typical pasta dinner, for example, provides three servings from the grains group. A bagel is equivalent to two servings. A single serving of cereal is three-quarters of a cup. A slice of toast is about one serving.

There are many easy ways to incorporate more breads, cereals, pasta and rice into the diet.

- Instead of skipping breakfast, eat a large bowl of cereal, a whole bagel or a muffin.

- For an afternoon snack, try breadsticks, or a hard or soft pretzel.

- Rather than eating pasta once a week, try a variety of sauces and serve pasta three times a week.

Try to get two or more servings of grain products per meal. For example:

- Eat a bowl of cereal and a piece of toast for breakfast.

- Eat a pasta salad along with your sandwich.

- Have a roll or piece of bread with your dinner.

The Wheat Foods Council is a nonprofit organization formed in 1972 to help increase public awareness of dietary grains, complex carbohydrates and fiber as essential components of a healthy diet. It is supported voluntarily by wheat producers, millers, bakers and related industries.



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