

WIC Connects One-to-One with Pasta!

Whole grain options are expanding in WIC! Starting October 1, 2015, WIC will be offering 100% whole wheat pasta for women and children. Here's how you can use your participant centered services skills to assist participants:

Ask an Open-Ended Question

Examples:

- What whole grain or whole wheat products have you tried before?
- What have you heard about the health benefits of eating whole grains?
- Tell me about any experience you have cooking with whole wheat pasta.
- What are your thoughts about possibly choosing whole wheat pasta as one of your WIC food options?
- If you were to begin cooking with whole wheat pasta at home, what information would be helpful?
- Tell me if and how (child's name) has tried whole wheat pasta?

Affirm

Examples:

- That's excellent you've tried using whole wheat pasta in recipes before.
- You're quite knowledgeable about the health reasons for eating whole grains.
- You do very well choosing healthy options for your family when shopping.
- You already have some super ideas about how you can include whole wheat pasta in recipes.
- That's great (child's name) likes several whole grain foods.
- That's excellent you've tried using whole wheat pasta in recipes before.

Reflect

Examples:

- You're happy WIC is expanding the whole grain options to include whole wheat pasta.
- You're feeling a little unsure about how to cook whole wheat pasta.
- Things that are important to you when shopping are taste, cost and nutrition.
- It sounds like you really enjoy eating whole grain foods.
- You're looking forward to trying some new recipes.
- You're unsure what your family will think about whole wheat pasta compared to the pasta they're used to eating.

Exchange Information (Educate)

Ask permission before offering advice or information about what has worked for others. Focus on the positive, offer ideas and options. Listen; let the participant decide what will work for them. Watch out for words that can provoke resistance (you shouldn't, you can't, you need to, you have to, you must...). Parents are motivated by information that is new or unique to them. Keep messages and tips both relevant and realistic. Below are some examples of information you might discuss.

- Starting October 1, women and children have the option to purchase 100% whole wheat pasta with WIC checks.

What is a whole grain?

All grains have three parts of the grain kernel when they grow: the bran, germ and endosperm. Whole grains (or foods made from them) contain all three parts with nutrients of the entire grain seed. Enriched ("white") flour contains only the endosperm, while whole grain flour contains extra protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals found only in the bran and germ. 100% whole wheat pasta is a whole grain product.

How to identify WIC authorized 100% whole wheat pasta:

Look for any brand of dry pasta in a 12 to 16 ounce box or bag that has either of the following listed as the only ingredient on the ingredients label: whole wheat flour or whole durum flour.

Storage of 100% whole wheat pasta:

Dried pasta can be stored indefinitely on the pantry shelf in an airtight container in a dry area that isn't exposed to extreme temperatures. For best flavor, USDA recommends storing dried pasta for no more than two years. Some manufacturers will stamp their packages with "best if used by" date. Cooked pasta can be stored in airtight containers in the refrigerator for 3 to 5 days. If possible, store pasta and sauce separately in the refrigerator. Cooked pasta may be frozen for up to two weeks.

Cooking 100% whole wheat pasta:

- Fill a large, deep pot with approximately five quarts of water for every pound of pasta you plan to cook.
- It's optional to stir in 1 Tablespoon of salt per each pound of pasta to enhance the cooked pasta's flavor (about 10% of the salt remains in the finished pasta).
- Bring the water to a rolling boil.
- Pour the pasta into the boiling water and stir immediately to prevent the individual pieces from sticking together.
- Keep the water at a low boil and continue to stir it every few minutes.
- Whole wheat pasta is fully cooked when it's soft enough to chew easily, has a little firmness, and isn't mushy. Package instructions list an estimated time, however stove top temperatures can vary. If the package lists a time range, start testing for doneness at the lower end of the range.
- Strain the liquid from the pasta.

Consumer-tested USDA core nutrition messages and ideas for using whole grains:

- Give yourself and those you love the goodness of whole grains. Make at least half of the grains you eat whole grains – such as bread, tortillas, pasta and cereals. Whole grains are good for your heart and digestion, and they can help you maintain a healthy weight and good overall health.
- Whole grains make a difference. Whole grains help keep your heart healthy and are good for digestion and a healthy weight. Choose foods with "100% whole wheat" or "100% whole grains" on the label.

Or check the ingredient list to see if the word “whole” is before the first ingredient listed (for example, whole wheat flour). If it is, it’s whole-grain.

- Start them early with whole grains. It’s easy to get your kids in the habit of eating and enjoying whole grains if you start when they are young. Whole grains give your kids B vitamins, minerals and fiber to help them be strong and healthy.
- Happy kids, happy tummies. Serve your little ones whole grain versions of their favorite bread, cereal or pasta. It’s a simple way to help them eat more whole grains. And, eating more whole grains that are higher in fiber can make potty time easier, too.
- Start every day the whole grain way. Help your kids get their day off to a healthy start. Serve whole-grain versions of cereal, bread, tortillas or pancakes at breakfast. Whole grains give your kids B vitamins, minerals and fiber to help them feel full longer so they stay alert to concentrate at preschool.

Additional ideas for using 100% whole wheat pasta:

- Offer buffet dinners for busy week nights – try creating a pasta bar with whole wheat pasta and several assorted toppings such as marinara sauce, olive oil, pesto, garlic, basil, cheese, cooked or chopped vegetables, meatballs or pieces of chicken, olives, sun dried tomatoes, artichoke hearts, etc.
- Add whole wheat pasta to vegetable salads, side dishes, soups, stews and casseroles.

USDA recommended grain group servings:

Age	Amount per day
1-3 years	3 ounce equivalents
4-5 years	5 ounce equivalents
Women	6 ounce equivalents
Pregnant/Breastfeeding	6 to 10 ounce equivalents

At least half of all grains eaten should be whole grains. In general the following is considered an ounce equivalent of grains:

- 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal, 1 six-inch tortilla, or ½ cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta or cooked cereal

For adults/children with a personal taste preference for pasta that’s not whole wheat:

- Serving whole wheat pasta with sauces/toppings that are familiar and delicious can make the transition easy.
- Let parents know that children often quickly adapt to a change in pasta taste. The difference in taste between white enriched pasta and whole wheat pasta is subtle.
- Blending types of pasta can ease the transition. Try mixing ½ whole wheat pasta with ½ enriched white pasta. As the taste becomes familiar, gradually decrease the amount of enriched pasta.

Gluten intolerance:

- Gluten is a substance present in wheat and some other grains that helps form the elastic texture of dough. Gluten causes illness in people with celiac disease, an autoimmune disease. The treatment for celiac disease is a gluten free diet (eliminating sources of gluten). Whole wheat pasta isn’t an appropriate food for participants following a gluten free diet.

Additional Resources:

- Whole Grains Council: <http://wholegrainscouncil.org>
- Wheat Foods Council: <http://www.wheatfoods.org>

- Idaho Wheat Commission: <http://www.idahowheat.org>
- USDA Choose My Plate: www.ChooseMyPlate.gov
- WIC Works; <http://wicworks.nal.usda.gov>

Next Step (Goal)

Examples:

- We've talked about recipe ideas for cooking with whole wheat pasta. Which recipe(s) would you like to try between now and your next WIC appointment?
- We've discussed several ideas today. What do you see as your next step towards including more whole grains in your meals or snacks?
- You seem comfortable with the option of trying whole wheat pasta. Tell me the specifics of how you plan to include pasta in your meals/snacks between now and your next WIC appointment.
- We've talked about various ways to eat whole wheat pasta. Which ones might you focus on doing between now and your next WIC appointment?
- From your comments, it sounds like blending pastas together might be a workable approach for introducing whole wheat pasta to your child. Tell me more about when you plan to do that?
- We discussed the whole grain options available on the ID WIC Authorized Food List. Which ones do you plan to buy between now and your next WIC appointment? How will you use them?

Summarize

Examples:

- In summary, you're used to cooking with enriched white pasta and have felt a little unsure about using whole wheat pasta in the past. Now you plan to switch to using whole wheat pasta in spaghetti with your family's favorite marinara sauce. At your next WIC appointment we'll talk about how that's working for you and your family.
- In conclusion, you're busy working two jobs and only have time to cook one day a week. On your day off you plan to cook a recipe in a quantity large enough to have leftovers for one or two dinners a week to eat healthier when working evenings. You plan to use recipes that include whole grains like whole wheat pasta, brown rice or corn tortillas. You can tell us about how you're managing with that when we see you in three months.
- You're already used to including whole grains in your family's diet and we've discussed some ways to increase the frequency aiming to make ½ of the grains whole grains. You plan to use whole grain cereal snack recipes as a way to provide a healthier afternoon snack. I look forward to hearing how it's going when we have our next appointment.
- Just to summarize, you're aware there's health benefits to eating whole grain products and plan to start eating whole wheat pasta as a casserole ingredient twice a week. During your next WIC visit we'll see how you're doing with that.
- To conclude, you've already tried 100% whole wheat pasta and your family didn't like it very well as a side dish. You feel making a flavorful soup using whole wheat pasta will work better for your family. Once they get used to that, you'll try another recipe. Next time you come to WIC we'll discuss how it's going.
- You like to cook and we've discussed recipe ideas using whole wheat pasta. You've selected four new recipes to try between now and your next appointment. We look forward to hearing about how you and your family like them.

Staff Tips

- Practice your participant centered skills by following the above format to create your own examples.
- Use wording that feels positive and comfortable to you.
- When something works well for you, share the information/ideas with other staff. It might work well for them, too!
- Contact the State Office with questions/feedback: Marie Collier, collierm@dhw.idaho.gov, 208-334-5953

THANK YOU!!!