

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. 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.

2008 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 which 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**.

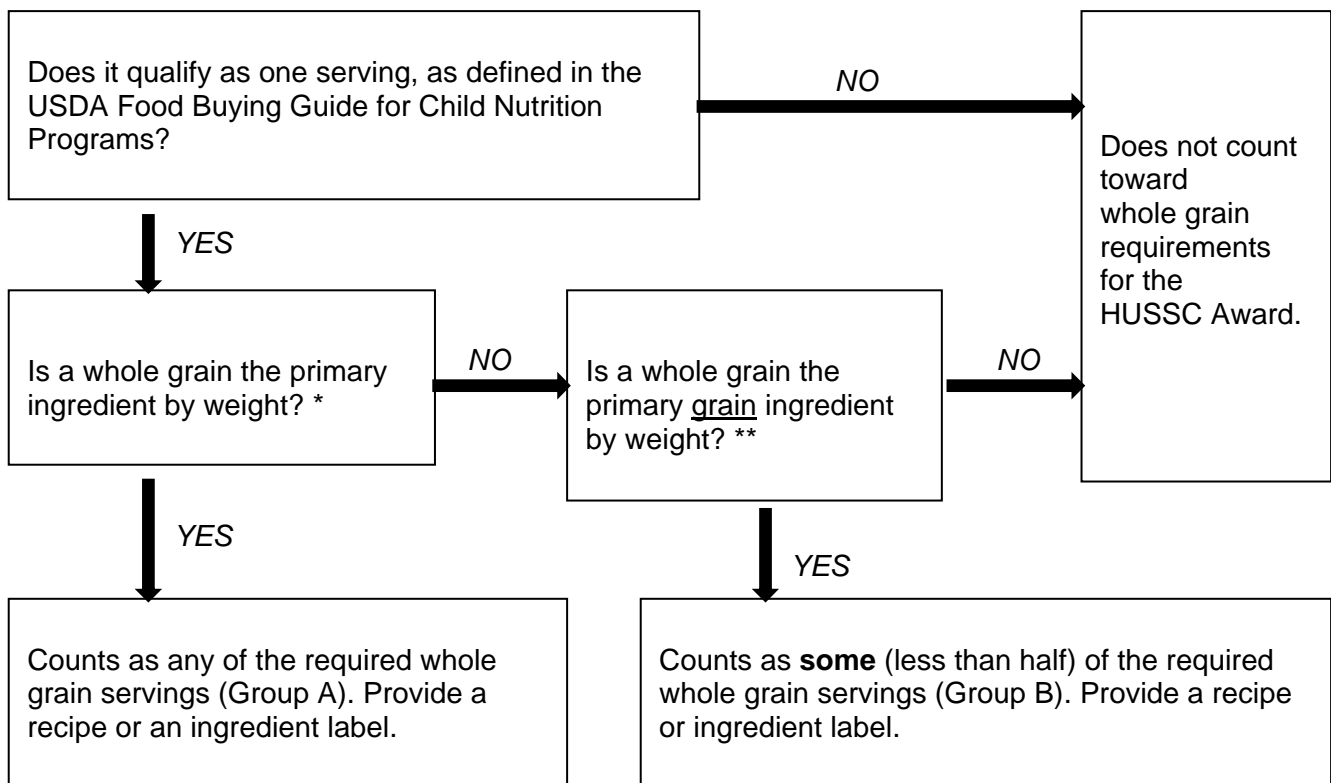
When a school-made recipe contains multiple whole grains, it will qualify under Group A if the total weight of the whole grains is more than the weight of any other ingredient. A recipe will qualify under Group B if the total weight of whole grains is more than the weight of the primary grain ingredient. 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/Gold Award of Distinction award, a food product meeting Group A would need to be offered three or more days each week and for a Bronze/Silver award, two 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 wording, you will know that, by regulation (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

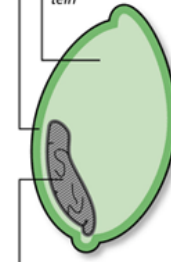
Whole grain kernel

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	phosphated flour	hominy grits
white flour	self-rising flour	hominy
wheat flour	self-rising wheat flour	farina
all-purpose flour	enriched self-rising flour	semolina
unbleached flour	bread flour	degerminated corn meal
bromated flour	cake flour	enriched rice
enriched bromated flour	durum flour	rice flour
enriched flour	corn grits	couscous
instantized flour		

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 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 food storage areas. To increase the shelf life, store these products in a cool, dry place in air tight 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 which 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:

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

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

**Attachment B: Documentation for Foods Containing Multiple Whole Grains
for the HealthierUS School Challenge**

Schools should provide this documentation on school letterhead for recipes. Manufacturers should provide this information on company letterhead for commercial products.

School District's or Company's Name _____

Recipe/Product Name _____ Product Code (if applicable) _____

1. Attach copy of recipe or product ingredient statement.
2. **Highlight** or underline all items that are whole grains in the attached recipe or product ingredient statement.
3. Serving size according to the recipe _____ or in grams for product _____
4. Total weight of all whole grain ingredients in the recipe or product _____
5. Weight of primary ingredient in recipe or listed first in ingredient statement _____
(To qualify for Group A: Weight of Item #4 is greater than Item #5.)
6. Weight of primary grain ingredient in recipe or listed first in ingredient statement _____
(To qualify for Group B: Weight of Item #4 is greater than Item #6.)
7. School District or Company representative's signature that all information is accurate:

Printed Name	Signature	Title
Email	Date	

For FNS/HUSSC evaluator:

A. Does the serving size for this food equal 1 G/B serving? (see Item #3) ____ Yes ____ No

B. Are all of the ingredients highlighted in Item #2 above, considered whole grains according to HUSSC criteria? _____ If not, ask for corrected information.

C. Does weight of Item #4 exceed weight of Item #5? ____ Yes ____ No

D. Does weight of Item #4 exceed weight of Item #6? ____ Yes ____ No

E. Are answers to Items A, B, and C yes? ____ Yes, food product meets Group A.

F. Are answers to Items A, B, and D yes? ____ Yes, food product meets Group B.