

## THE WHOLE TRUTH

### Eating right grains key to new pyramid

By Maryjo Foith Morgan  
For the Survivor

The MyPyramid implores us to "Eat at least 3 ounces of whole grain bread, cereal, crackers, rice, or pasta every day. Look for 'whole' before the grain name on the list of ingredients."

OK, now we have to face it. Somehow we always knew that the bread in the colorful "bubble" wrapper couldn't be all that good for us — not if it could ball up in the palm of our hands.

We have to admit it, we are a generation brought up on Wonder Bread, Kix-A-Roni and Frosted Flakes, all made of refined ingredients, which hardly require chewing, and all seriously lack fiber.

Although flour may start out as whole wheat, processing refines it, taking out the fiber along with the bran and wheat germ, bleaches it, and then, finally chemically adds back in nutrients and vitamins that were there in the first place naturally.

Some grain products contain significant amounts of bran, which provides fiber. However, products with added bran or bran alone (e.g., oat bran) are not necessarily whole-grain products.

Another thing that comes as no surprise is that "white" rice started out as whole grain brown rice but in the milling process lost the bran and germ.

Gene also are the dietary fiber, iron and many B vitamins. Rice, including the partially cooked "minute rice," is bolstered by adding back these vital components. The resulting enriched product may have the vitamins and minerals restored, but not the original fiber content.

So, why not bypass as much processing as possible and simply eat whole grain products?

Health-food stores have always carried breads containing a variety of whole grains, nuts, and seeds. These breads have some heft to them.

You can find many of these health-

ier choices in mainstream supermarkets now since the current consumer demand and aggressive competition among grocers has broadened our selection.

Of course, whole grains are not limited to breads, and other examples of foods considered as "grain products" include rice, cornmeal, barley, pasta, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits.

One whole grain that has endured is popcorn — it in itself is quite good for us until we add gobs of butter and tons of salt which ruin its nutritional aspects.

Air-popped with a bit of freshly grated parmesan would make popcorn a healthier snack.

So how exactly do we improve our daily diet with whole grains as suggested on MyPyramid?

For starters, switch to whole wheat bread. We need to become label-readers and watch for the words "whole" preceding the grain listed.

Some hints found on MyPyramid include looking for these whole-grain ingredients first on the label's ingredient list: brown rice, bulgur, graham flour, oatmeal, whole-grain corn, whole oats, whole rye, whole wheat and wild rice.

Be watchful for foods labeled with the words "multi-grain," "stone-ground," "100-percent wheat," "cracked wheat," "seven-grain," or

"bran" since they are usually not whole-grain products. Don't be fooled.

Also, be aware that color is not an indication of a whole grain. Bread can be brown because of molasses or other added ingredients, so you have to read the ingredient list to see if it is a whole grain product.

And while involved in the "label reading," note that sugar is often added to products (yes, even bread) and is "hidden" under terms such as sucrose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey and molasses.

Oils (partially hydrogenated vegetable oils) add unnecessary calories, so it is better to choose foods with fewer added sugars, fats or oils.

Another sneaky culprit to watch out for is sodium. MyPyramid warns us, "Similar packaged foods can vary widely in sodium content, including breads. Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose foods with a lower % DV for sodium. Foods with less than 140 mg sodium per serving can be labeled as low-sodium foods, so despite claims such as 'low in sodium' on the front of the food label, read the Nutrition Facts label routinely.

Use the information listed on each package's Nutrition Facts label to help you choose products with a higher percentage daily value (%DV) for fiber — the %DV for fiber is a good clue to the amount of whole grain in the product.

Next, switch to whole wheat pasta, including whole wheat lasagna noodles. You will be surprised at the mild flavor and nice texture, not to mention the variety currently available.

Brown rice is another easy choice, and you get the benefit of more fiber there, too. When your family questions the different look, you can have "It has a fuller taste" as a ready answer instead of the tired, "It is good for you."

Long ago I exchanged bags of fried tortillas for baked tortilla chips that I made myself from whole wheat tortillas. Easy recipe is listed below.

See if you can include some of these common whole grains into your diet: brown rice, buckwheat, bulgur (cracked wheat), oatmeal, and popcorn.

Ready-to-eat breakfast cereals include whole-wheat cereal flakes and bran.

Note: Granolas, though tasty, are usually loaded with sugar and oils, so instead, I've made my own granola simply by going down the bulk food aisle and choosing as many different types of rolled whole grains I could find and adding dried fruit without any added sugars. Must be kept moistened with low-fat plain yogurt or low-fat soy milk.

Here are more products to look for and try: whole-grain barley (great in soups or as a side dish substitute), whole-grain cornmeal, whole rye, whole-wheat bread, whole-wheat crackers, whole-wheat pasta, whole-

wheat sandwich buns and rolls, whole wheat tortillas and wild rice.

Less common but delicious whole grains include amaranth, millet (this is great in homemade breads), quinoa (I'll share a refreshing recipe soon), sorghum and triticale.

Some common refined grains are cornbread\*, corn tortillas\*, couscous\*, crackers\*, flour tortillas\*, grits, pitas\*, pretzels, and all types of noodles\*, spaghetti, and macaroni.

(\*Most of these products are made from refined grains, but some are made from whole grains. Check the ingredient list for the words "whole grain" or "whole wheat" to decide if they are made from a whole grain.)

Some foods are made from a mixture of whole and refined grains. Better a mixture than all refined.

In your efforts toward a healthier diet, avoid refined, ready-to-eat breakfast cereals, corn flakes, white bread, white sandwich buns and rolls, and white rice.

Some grain products contain significant amounts of bran. Bran provides fiber, which is important for health. However, products with added bran or bran alone (e.g., oat bran) are not necessarily whole-grain products.

Still wondering why is it important to eat grains, especially whole grains?

According to MyPyramid, eating at least 3 ounces of whole grains a day as part of a healthy diet has numerous benefits.

(In general, one slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal or 1/2 cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta or cooked cereal constitutes 1 ounce.)

Grains provide many nutrients that are vital for the health and maintenance of our bodies. Dietary fiber from whole grains, as part of an overall healthy diet, helps reduce blood cholesterol levels, may lower risk of coronary heart disease and aids in proper bowel function which reduces constipation and diverticulosis. Eating whole grains can help with weight management since fiber-containing foods provide a feeling of fullness with fewer calories. Eating grains fortified with folate before and during pregnancy helps prevent neural tube defects during fetal development.

### Baked Tortilla Chips

Use whole wheat or fresh corn tortillas.

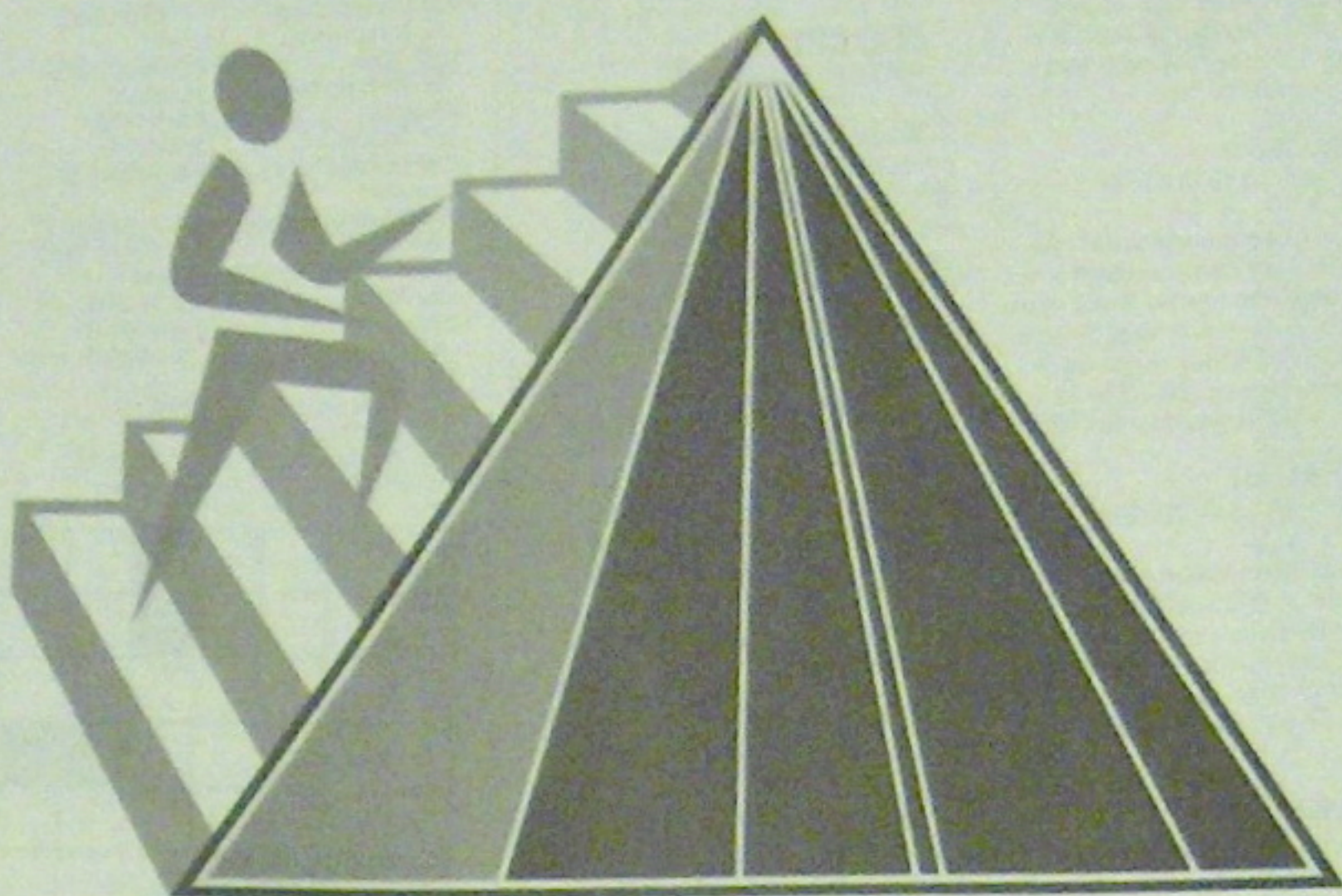
Cut tortillas into eighths. Arrange on a dry cookie sheet.

Bake at 400 degrees for five to 15 minutes or until lightly browned.

**CAUTION:** At this temperature, these chips can go from lightly browned to flaming crispy critters in a matter of seconds — do not leave unattended.

Over temperatures vary. Cool thoroughly on racks and store in a large plastic container that seals well.

Now you have a snack that has no added fat contained in fried chips, and you have exchanged an "empty" refined flour for a whole grain substitute.



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