

# Serving Grains in the CACFP

Centers and homes that participate in the CACFP provide healthy and balanced meals for the children and adults that they serve. While the CACFP meal patterns are important to establishing a healthy foundation for our participants, sometimes they can be difficult to understand. Here's what you need to know about serving grains in the CACFP:

## ① Is it creditable?

All grain items must be enriched or whole-grain, made from enriched or whole grain meal and/or flour **or** be a ready-to-eat cereal that is either whole-grain, enriched or fortified.

- ✓ Check the label. Is the product labeled as "whole grain" (i.e. "whole-wheat bread) or "enriched" (i.e. "enriched rice")

**OR**

- ✓ Check the ingredient list. Is the first ingredient labeled as enriched (i.e. "enriched flour") or "whole-grain" (i.e. "whole wheat flour" or "cracked wheat") or bran and/or germ (i.e. "oat bran" or "wheat germ")

**Note:** Even if the product meets the above criteria, any food item that is considered to be a 'grain based dessert' will still not be considered creditable towards a reimbursable CACFP meal.



## ② How much do I need to serve?

All grain items must provide at least ¼ serving of grains to contribute to the CACFP meal pattern requirements. Each age/grade group and meal period has different requirements on the total amount of grains that must be served in order for a meal to be reimbursable.

- ✓ Refer to the CACFP meal pattern to ensure that you know the total amount of grains needed for your age group and meal period (i.e. ½ serving, 1 serving, etc.); then find your food item in the grain chart, Exhibit A, to determine the minimum serving size by weight for each type of product.

**OR**

- ✓ Refer to the Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS) to determine how your product will credit towards the CACFP meal pattern.

**Note:** it is also possible to complete a calculation to determine the required serving size of a grain product, but this requires the menu planner to know the total weight of creditable grains in a product. Refer to the Food Buying Guide – Appendix E for more information on this method.

## ③ Does it count as 'whole grain-rich'?

At least one CACFP meal period per day where grains are served must include a grain item that is considered to be 'whole grain-rich' (WGR).

- ✓ Use the criteria on the next page to determine if your grain item is WGR. If not, you can still serve it but be sure to include a WGR item in at least one other CACFP meal served throughout the day.

**AND**

- ✓ Remember if you offer multiple grain choices in one meal period (i.e. cereal or toast) then *all* grain items offered during the meal period must be WGR to count towards your one WGR item per day.



# What does it mean to be “Whole Grain-Rich” in the CACFP?

To help ensure that children are getting the recommended daily servings of whole grains, CACFP Sponsors must include a whole grain-rich (WGR) food item during *at least* one meal period per day where grains are served. WGR foods contain more fiber, protein and nutrients than refined grains. To be considered WGR in the CACFP, a food must contain at least 50% whole grains by weight AND any remaining grains must be enriched.

You can determine if your food item meets CACFP whole grain-rich standards if it meets any one of the following criteria:

## ① THE FOOD IS LABELED “WHOLE WHEAT”

Grain products that are labeled “whole wheat” meet the whole grain-rich criteria. See below for examples.

- ✓ “Whole wheat bread”
- ✓ “Entire wheat bread”
- ✓ “Whole wheat rolls”
- ✓ “Whole wheat buns”
- ✓ “Entire wheat buns”



## ② THE FOOD MEETS THE RULE OF THREE

Grain products that meet the “Rule of Three” meet the whole grain-rich criteria.

- ✓ A whole grain is the first grain ingredient on the ingredients list such as whole wheat, brown or wild rice, oatmeal, whole grain corn, bulgur, or quinoa.

AND

- ✓ The next two grain ingredients are creditable (whole grains, enriched grains, bran or germ).

## ③ WHOLE GRAIN CLAIMS

Alternatively, the product is whole grain-rich if it has one of these health claims on its packaging.

- ✓ “Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods and low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers.”

OR

- ✓ “Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods and low in saturated fat and cholesterol may help reduce the risk of heart disease.”



## ④ ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Grain products with documentation that shows whole grains are the primary ingredient by weight meet the whole grain-rich criteria.

- ✓ A product formulation statement from the manufacturer OR
- ✓ A Child Nutrition (CN) label OR
- ✓ A standardized recipe

