Healthy Whole Grains

This month you learned about the important health benefits of eating whole grains. You also learned that whole grains have fiber, which helps to reduce blood cholesterol and constipation and lowers the risk for heart disease. Fiber can also help with maintaining a healthy weight because it provides a feeling of fullness for fewer calories.

This month take a family trip to the grocery store and look for whole grains and other food items that will help you meet your daily fiber needs. You can then keep a journal and record the foods you eat that have fiber and see if you are meeting your daily needs. To find out how much fiber you need, you can follow the “age + 5” rule. For example, if you are 14 years old, you should try to eat at least 19 grams of fiber every day (14 + 5 = 19).

The best sources of fiber are fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts and legumes, and whole-grain foods. A high-fiber food has 5 grams or more of fiber per serving and a good source has 2.5 to 4.9 grams per serving. You probably already eat some fiber every day without even realizing it, but here are some simple ways to make sure you’re getting enough.

Here is how some fiber-friendly foods stack up:

- ½ cup cooked navy beans (9.5 grams of fiber)
- ½ cup cooked lima beans (6.6 grams)
- 1 medium baked sweet potato with peel (4.8 grams)
- 1 whole-wheat English muffin (4.4 grams)
- ½ cup of cooked green peas (4.4 grams)
- 1 medium pear with skin (4 grams)
- ½ cup raspberries (4 grams)
- 1 medium baked potato with peel left on (3.8 grams)
- ¼ cup oat bran cereal (3.6 grams)
- 1 ounce almonds (3.3 grams)
- 1 medium apple with skin (3.3 grams)
- ½ cup raisins (3 grams)
- ¼ cup baked beans (3 grams)
- 1 medium orange (3 grams)
- 1 medium banana (3 grams)
- ½ cup canned sauerkraut (3 grams)
Once you have returned from the store, review your shopping trip and answer the following questions.

How many food items did you buy that are considered to be “high fiber?
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How many food items did you buy that are considered “good” sources of fiber?
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What are some ways that you could meet your daily fiber goal with the food items you bought?
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Remember that a trip to the grocery store can help you to be more physically active. Try having your parents park farther away from the store so you can get more walking in. Even walking up and down the aisles can be considered as physical activity. Make sure to record the time you spent shopping in your physical activity calendar!

Source: (www.kidshealth.org)