Whole Grains and Fiber
The term fiber refers to carbohydrates, specifically plant products, that are not digestible by the human body. Fibers can be classified as soluble or insoluble. Soluble fiber partially dissolves in water, while insoluble fiber does not. Sources of soluble fiber include oatmeal, oat bran, nuts and seeds, peas, beans, and fruits such as apples, pears, strawberries, and blueberries. Soluble fiber has been shown to help lower blood cholesterol, which can decrease one’s risk for heart disease. Insoluble fiber from whole grains, wheat bran, carrots, cucumbers, zucchini, and celery aids the body in moving foods through the digestive system and in having normal bowel function.

In addition to lowering the risk of heart disease, diets high in fiber have also been shown to protect against type 2 diabetes. A study done by Harvard School of Public Health showed that diets high in refined foods such as white bread, white rice, refined cereals, and white pasta were twice as likely to lead to diabetes than diets containing high fiber foods.

In order to determine how many grams of fiber a child should have each day, you should add five to the child’s age in years. For example, a ten-year-old should get about 15 grams of fiber each day. Information about the fiber content of foods is found on their nutrition labels.

(Sources: USDA, Harvard School of Public Health, American Heart Association)

Club Roll Call: What is your New Year’s fitness or nutrition resolution?

Physical Activity Calendars
Collect the December Physical Activity Calendar from each participant. Record each individual’s total number of activity minutes on the Get Up and Move! Club Chart.

Have a short discussion to review the Physical Activity Pyramid and reflect on each one’s activity for the past month. Have each individual look closely at his or her calendar to see how his or her activity matches the advice from the Physical Activity Pyramid.

Reflection Questions:
Did you see an increase of physical activity over days in December?
What types of physical activity have you been doing indoors since it is colder outside?
What types of outdoor activity have you been able to do?

Pass out the January Physical Activity Calendar.

Educational Activity
In this month’s physical activity, members will participate in two activities that will get them up and moving and also give them a chance to practice team-building skills. The first activity is “The Human Knot” in which members will work to disentangle themselves by wiggling, turning, stepping over hands, and ducking under arms. In the second activity, members will hold hands, forming a large circle, and work to move a hula hoop all the way around the circle. These activities are sure to be fun and bring members closer together!
Recipes/Snacks
This month’s snack features bulgar wheat. Bulgar wheat has been produced and served around the world for thousands of years, eaten by both Chinese and Roman emperors. Today it is most often found in Mediterranean, Indian and Middle Eastern dishes. A serving of whole grain bulgur (half a cup, cooked) has more than four grams of dietary fiber and only a quarter of a gram of fat. It also has a high level of minerals such as calcium, phosphorus and potassium and vitamins A and K. This month’s recipe is for Bulgar Wheat and Vegetables.

Family Activity
This month’s family activity is the Whole Grain Challenge. Families will explore the benefits of whole-grain bread and will consider eating it instead of white bread. They are also challenged to replace white rice with whole-grain rice and regular pasta with whole-grain pasta. Another activity families can do is the Bread Scavenger Hunt. This will help them learn more about whole-grain options! As a physical activity option, member families can arrange a visit to a local wall-climbing center.

Community Activity
The January community activity encourages members to take a neighborhood survey to see what types of bread people eat the most – whole-grain or white. They are encouraged to create a short presentation about the benefits of whole-grain products and present it to those neighbors and friends who eat white bread in hopes of persuading them to commit to switching for one week. Members can report their findings at the February club meeting. Another option is to give the short presentation at a senior citizen center or club or at a civic group, such as a Rotary or Kiwanis meeting.

Ties to 4-H Projects
This month’s community activity allows those members enrolled in Public Presentations to practice their speech skills by talking to neighbors about the importance of whole grain foods. Members can also make posters to take with them on their neighborhood visits to practice their display making skills. Members in Small Grains might want to learn more about the parts of a whole grain kernel – the bran, the germ, and the endosperm. Both the 4-H Breads and Cereals and Fruits and Vegetables projects will allow members to explore these high-fiber foods and dishes they can make using them.

All materials can be found on the State 4-H website at http://www.4-h.uiuc.edu/opps/move.