

# How to Spot and Talk About Symptoms That Could Mean You're Malnourished

Poor nutrition and eating problems can put you at risk of being malnourished. Malnutrition threatens your health and your ability to recover from injuries or illnesses. That's why it is important for you to know what symptoms to look for and when you need to address them.

If you were recently hospitalized, been given directions regarding your diet, or been told you need a bit more nourishment, it is particularly important that you keep, follow, and share this information with those who care for you.



## What You Need to Watch For

Since malnutrition may not be immediately apparent, you need to watch for, write down, and talk about any changes you notice in:

- Your appetite
- Your weight
- How much food you eat
- Your daily activity levels
- Your bowel habits
- Swelling in your belly, legs, ankles, and feet



**You're doing OK if you can say:** *"I feel good. I eat three meals a day and have the energy to do what I want."*

## When You Need to Be Concerned

If you notice any of the following warning signs, you need to discuss them with your healthcare provider:

- Sudden loss or decrease in appetite
- Episodes of nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea for more than three days
- Eating less than 75% of a normal meal for more than a week
- Unplanned weight loss greater than 10 pounds
- Decrease in activity level



**Schedule an appointment if you find yourself saying:** *"I haven't wanted to eat anything since I started this new medication..." "I'm not finishing my meals like I used to..." "My stomach has been upset for days..." "My clothes don't seem to be fitting like they had been..." "I don't have any energy..."*

## When You're in Danger from Malnutrition

The following are dangerous signs that you could be malnourished:

- Eating half as much as you normally do for more than a week
- Sudden and rapid weight loss with noticeable muscle and/or fat loss
- Persistent nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Swelling in your feet, ankles, legs, or belly
- Feeling confused or having increased memory loss



**Act immediately if you find yourself saying:** *"It's been over a week and I can hardly eat a bite..." "I can't stop going to the bathroom..." "My feet and ankles are swollen..." "I can't concentrate when my family is talking to me ..."*

## Keep Watching and Keep Talking

Don't take changes in your nutrition for granted. Be aware of what you may have been thinking or saying about how you've been eating and how you've been feeling. Share your conversations and symptoms with your healthcare provider. **Don't wait for them to ask!**

## You're at the Highest Risk If...

You need to be constantly watchful for the warning signs of malnutrition if you are 85 years old or older. A number of acute or chronic diseases also put you at a much higher risk. Be sure to talk with your healthcare provider if you suffer from any of the following:

- Injury or Trauma
- Any diseases requiring multiple medications
- Cancer
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Kidney or Liver Disease
- Gastrointestinal Dysfunctions such as Inflammatory Bowel Disease
- Depression or Dementia

## Visit the Malnutrition Solution Center

Take advantage of the valuable information and free resources that can help you, your family members and caregivers identify and understand malnutrition available at [nutritioncare.org/malnutrition](https://nutritioncare.org/malnutrition).

Here you can:

- Learn from the true-life stories of patients who've suffered from malnutrition
- Download nutrition tips and helpful posters on spotting malnutrition in children and adults
- Learn about other resources for older adults, including links to local Meals on Wheels programs

*This information is adapted from a video presented by Angela Newton, MBA, RD, and the ASPEN Malnutrition Committee. The video and other resources on malnutrition can be found at [nutritioncare.org/malnutrition](https://nutritioncare.org/malnutrition).*

## Tips for Proper Nutrition and Staying Healthy



Eat **three balanced meals every day** that include protein and fiber from fruits, vegetables and whole grains

**Stay hydrated** with fluids (8 cups per day for most adults)



Follow your **healthcare provider's or dietitian's orders** for any diet restrictions including fluids

Know your **bowel habits** (frequency and consistency)



**Check your weight** weekly and write it down

# 5 Facts about Malnutrition

## FACT 1: Malnourished individuals can come in all sizes

- 715,000 U.S. adults aged 65+ are **underweight**
- 1 in 3 U.S. adults aged 65+ are **overweight**
- You can be underweight or overweight and still malnourished

## FACT 2: Malnutrition affects all groups of people

- 9 million older adults **can't afford nutritious food**
- 1 in 4 adults aged 65+ either reduces meal sizes or **skips meals**
- 16% of independent older adults are **at high risk** for malnutrition
- Up to 60% of older adults in **health care settings** are malnourished

## FACT 3: Malnutrition can come from a number of factors

- Chronic conditions
- Limited income
- Trouble swallowing/chewing
- Poor dental health
- Changing taste buds
- Living alone
- Medication side effects
- Poor appetite
- Restricted diets
- Lack of mobility
- Depression
- Dementia
- Gastrointestinal disorders



## FACT 4: You can't always prevent or treat malnutrition by just eating more

- **Adjust your diet** to get all the nutrients your body needs
- **Exercise** to build muscle and improve strength
- **Consult** a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist
- Consider using an **oral nutritional supplement**

## FACT 5: Malnutrition has many warning signs

- Muscle weakness
- Fatigue
- Increased illness or infection
- Feeling irritable or depressed
- Unplanned weight loss
- Decreased appetite



# ASK ABOUT YOUR NUTRITION

Good Nutrition Can Help You Prevent Infections,  
Heal Faster, Feel Stronger



ARE YOU OR YOUR LOVED ONE EXPERIENCING ANY OF THESE?



**TALK TO YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER**



# PREGUNTE SOBRE SU CONDICIÓN NUTRICIONAL

Una Buena Nutrición, Puede Ayudar A Prevenir Infecciones, Sanar Más Rápido y Sentirse Más Fuerte



¿UDS. O SUS SERES QUERIDOS HAN EXPERIMENTADO ESTO?



**HABLE CON SU PROVEEDOR DE ATENCIÓN MÉDICA**

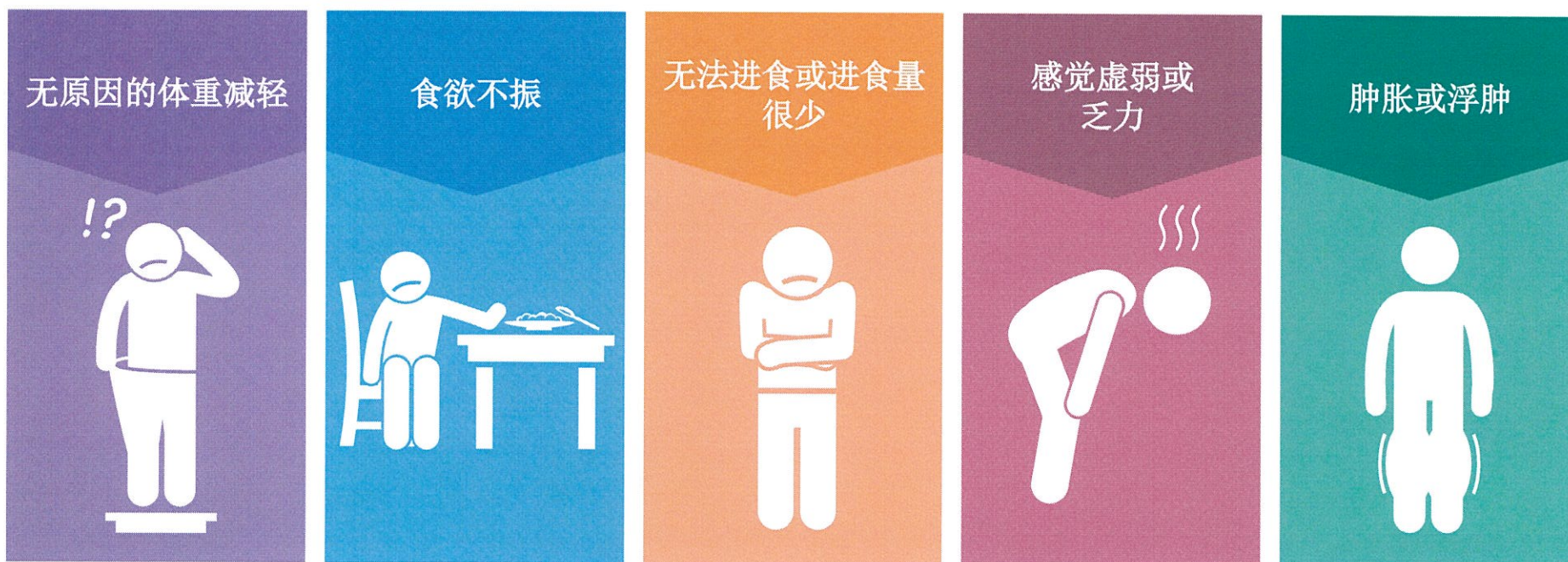


# 询问您的营养状况

好的营养能帮助您预防感染,  
加速愈合和增强体质



您或您的家人有这些症状吗？



请告知您的健康保健医务人员

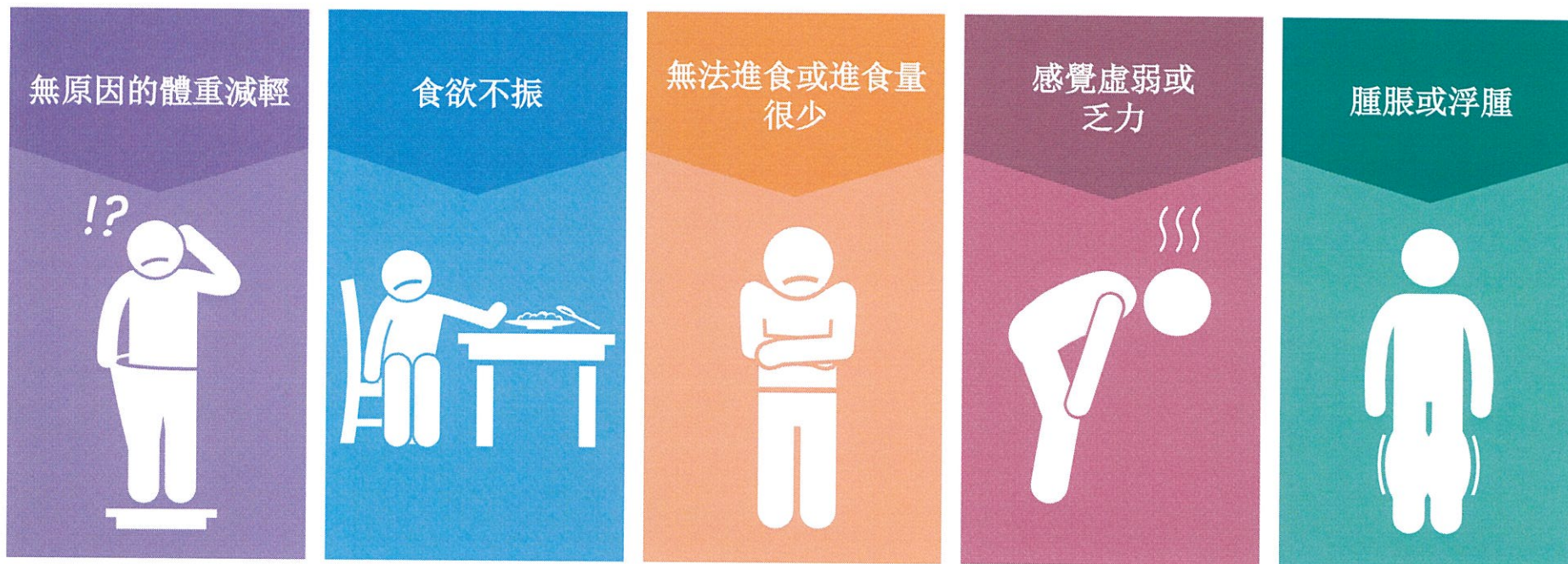


# 詢問您的營養狀況

好的營養能幫助你預防感染，  
加速愈合和增強體質



您或您的家人有这些症状吗？



請告知您的健康保健醫務人員

# Self-MNA<sup>®</sup>

## Mini Nutritional Assessment

*For Adults 65 years of Age and Older*

Last name:

First name:

Date:

Age:

Complete the screen by filling in the boxes with the appropriate numbers. Total the numbers for the final screening score.

### Screening

**A Has your food intake declined over the past 3 months?**  
**[ENTER ONE NUMBER]**

*Please enter the most appropriate number (0, 1, or 2) in the box to the right.*

0 = severe decrease in food intake  
1 = moderate decrease in food intake  
2 = no decrease in food intake

**B How much weight have you lost in the past 3 months?**  
**[ENTER ONE NUMBER]**

*Please enter the most appropriate number (0, 1, 2 or 3) in the box to the right.*

0 = weight loss greater than 7 pounds  
1 = do not know the amount of weight lost  
2 = weight loss between 2 and 7 pounds  
3 = no weight loss or weight loss less than 2 pounds

**C How would you describe your current mobility?**  
**[ENTER ONE NUMBER]**

*Please enter the most appropriate number (0, 1, or 2) in the box to the right.*

0 = unable to get out of a bed, a chair, or a wheelchair without the assistance of another person  
1 = able to get out of bed or a chair, but unable to go out of my home  
2 = able to leave my home

**D Have you been stressed or severely ill in the past 3 months?**  
**[ENTER ONE NUMBER]**

*Please enter the most appropriate number (0 or 2) in the box to the right.*

0 = yes  
2 = no

**E Are you currently experiencing dementia and/or prolonged severe sadness?**  
**[ENTER ONE NUMBER]**

*Please enter the most appropriate number (0, 1, or 2) in the box to the right.*

0 = yes, severe dementia and/or prolonged severe sadness  
1 = yes, mild dementia, but no prolonged severe sadness  
2 = neither dementia nor prolonged severe sadness

**Please total all of the numbers you entered in the boxes for questions A-E and write the numbers here:**



Now, please CHOOSE ONE of the following two questions – F1 or F2 – to answer.

## Question F1

Height (feet & inches)		Body Weight (pounds)		
4'10"	Less than 91	91 – 99	100 – 109	110 or more
4'11"	Less than 94	94 – 103	104 – 113	114 or more
5'0"	Less than 97	97 – 106	107 – 117	118 or more
5'1"	Less than 100	100 – 110	111 – 121	122 or more
5'2"	Less than 104	104 – 114	115 – 125	126 or more
5'3"	Less than 107	107 – 117	118 – 129	130 or more
5'4"	Less than 110	110 – 121	122 – 133	134 or more
5'5"	Less than 114	114 – 125	126 – 137	138 or more
5'6"	Less than 118	118 – 129	130 – 141	142 or more
5'7"	Less than 121	121 – 133	134 – 145	146 or more
5'8"	Less than 125	125 – 137	138 – 150	151 or more
5'9"	Less than 128	128 – 141	142 – 154	155 or more
5'10"	Less than 132	132 – 145	146 – 159	160 or more
5'11"	Less than 136	136 – 149	150 – 164	165 or more
6'0"	Less than 140	140 – 153	154 – 168	169 or more
6'1"	Less than 144	144 – 158	159 – 173	174 or more
6'2"	Less than 148	148 – 162	163 – 178	179 or more
6'3"	Less than 152	152 – 167	168 – 183	184 or more
6'4"	Less than 156	156 – 171	172 – 188	189 or more
<b>Group</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

**Please refer to the chart on the left and follow these instructions:**

1. Find your height on the left-hand column of the chart.
2. Go across that row and circle the range that your weight falls into.
3. Look to the bottom of the chart to find out what group number (0, 1, 2, or 3) your circled weight range falls into.

**Write the Group Number (0, 1, 2, or 3) here:**

**Write sum of questions A-E (from page 1)**

**Lastly, calculate the sum of these 2 numbers. This is your SCREENING SCORE:**

## Question F2 **DO NOT ANSWER QUESTION F2 IF QUESTION F1 IS ALREADY COMPLETED.**

**Measure the circumference of your LEFT calf by following the instructions below:**

1. Loop a tape measure all the way around your calf to measure its size.
2. Record the measurement in cm: \_\_\_\_\_
  - If less than 31cm, enter "0" in the box to the right.
  - If 31cm or greater, enter "3" in the box to the right.



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**Write the sum of questions A-E (from page 1) here:**

**Lastly, calculate the sum of these 2 numbers. This is your SCREENING SCORE:**

## Screening Score (14 points maximum)

**12–14 points:** Normal nutritional status

**8–11 points:** At risk of malnutrition

**0–7 points:** Malnourished

**Copy your SCREENING SCORE:**

If you score between 0-11, please take this form to a healthcare professional for consultation.



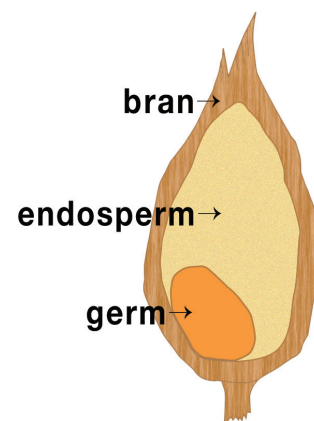
## Whole Grains Defined

Whole grains play a role in a healthy diet, helping to fuel our bodies and brains. Studies show that eating whole grains instead of refined grains can lower the risk of many chronic diseases, and switching to whole grains also can help with weight control. Benefits kick in with even one serving (16g), but aim for three or more servings daily for best health results.

### WHAT EXACTLY IS A WHOLE GRAIN?

Whole grains or foods made from them contain all the essential parts and naturally-occurring nutrients of the entire grain seed in their original proportions. If the grain has been processed (e.g., cracked, crushed, rolled, extruded, and/or cooked), the food product should deliver the same rich balance of nutrients that are found in the original grain seed.

This means that 100% of the original kernel – all of the bran, germ, and endosperm – must be present to qualify as a whole grain. These three parts - the outer bran layer rich in fiber and B vitamins; the germ, full of antioxidants; and the starchy endosperm, each bring something nutritious and delicious to the table. When you eat the “whole” grain you’re enjoying a good for you food.



### REFINED GRAINS

If the bran and germ (the healthiest parts) are removed, the grain is said to be refined. Refined grains are missing about two-thirds of many essential nutrients. Some grains are then enriched, but this only returns about five the missing nutrients.

### HOW TO IDENTIFY A WHOLE GRAIN

An easy way to distinguish whole grain products is to look for the **Whole Grain Stamp** on the package (shown here). The basic stamp guarantees you’re getting at least half a serving (8g) or more of whole grain. And if you see 100% Stamp, you’ll know that all the grain ingredients in the package are whole grains.

If you don’t see the stamp on the package, check the ingredient list. Whole grains, such as those in the list below, will appear near the top.



- Amaranth
- Barley
- Buckwheat
- Corn, including whole cornmeal and popcorn
- Millet
- Oats, including oatmeal
- Quinoa
- Rice, both brown rice and colored rice
- Rye
- Sorghum (also called milo)
- Teff
- Triticale
- Whole wheat, including varieties such as spelt, emmer, farro, einkorn, Kamut®, durum, and forms such as bulgur, cracked wheat, and wheat berries
- Wild rice














## How Much Whole Grain is Enough?

Experts recommend eating six servings of grain per day, at least three of which are whole grain.

A serving\* of grain is any of the following: one slice of bread; a half cup of cooked oatmeal, pasta or rice; an ounce of crackers; or a cup of dry cold cereal. These pictures show how easy and delicious it can be to get three or more servings of whole grain each day.

 <p>1 cup oatmeal 2 servings of whole grain</p>	 <p>a sandwich 2 servings of whole grain</p>	 <p>½ cup brown rice 1 serving of whole grain</p>
 <p>1 whole wheat English muffin 2 servings whole grain</p>	 <p>3 cups popcorn 1 serving of whole grain</p>	 <p>1 cup 50% whole grain pasta 1 serving of whole grain</p>
 <p>1 cup whole grain cereal 1 serving of whole grain</p>	 <p>½ round whole wheat pita 1 serving whole grain</p>	 <p>1 cup cooked quinoa 2 servings of whole grain</p>

\* a serving of grain is also sometimes called an “ounce equivalent” because it equals about the amount of food that weighs an ounce.

continued



## Will the Real Whole Grains Please Stand Up?

Many products containing significant amounts of whole grains now sport the Whole Grain Stamp. But what if a product doesn't? Then you need to decipher the ingredient list, and this chart can help.

### Words you may see on packages

### What they mean



- whole grain [name of grain]
- whole wheat
- whole [name of grain]
- brown rice, wild rice
- oats, oatmeal
- wheat berries, rye berries
- bulgur

#### Yes!

These are all whole grains, containing all three edible parts of the grain (the bran, the germ, and endosperm, in their original proportions) so you're getting all the goodness and nutrients of whole grains.



- wheat or wheat flour
- semolina
- organic flour
- stoneground
- grits
- polenta
- couscous
- multigrain (may describe several whole grains, or several refined grains, or a mix of both)

#### Caution!

These words are accurate descriptions of the package contents, but because some parts of the grain may be missing, you are likely losing out on the benefits of whole grains. Don't trust any of these words unless you also see the word "whole."



- enriched flour, all-purpose flour
- degerminated (on corn meal)
- bran
- wheat germ
- pearl barley

#### No!

These words never describe whole grains.

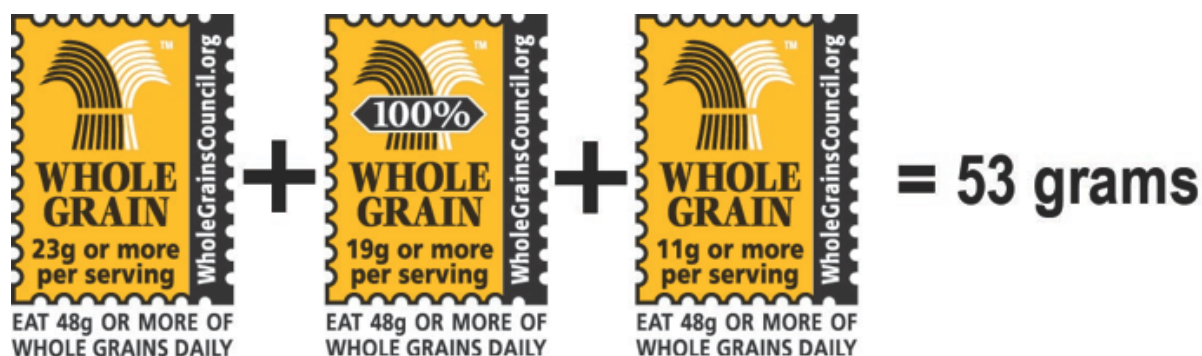




### LOOK FOR THE WHOLE GRAIN STAMP

Sometimes foods are made with a mix of whole and refined grains. Then, the easiest way to get enough whole grain is to look for the Whole Grain Stamp and make sure you're eating 48 grams of whole grain or more each day.

The Stamp tells you just how much whole grain is in a serving of food. And, if you see the 100% banner, you know that all the grain in that food is whole grain. For example, these three Whole Grain Stamps would add up to 53 grams of whole grain.



No need to do the math, though: all foods with the Whole Grain Stamp are guaranteed to contain at least 8 grams of whole grain, so if all six of your grain servings have the Stamp, you'll automatically be getting the recommended 48 grams or more of whole grain daily.

### **Brown Rice with Sizzling Chicken & Vegetables**

**Preparation/Cook Time:** 30 minutes **Number of Servings:** 4

#### **Ingredients:**

- 3 Tablespoons low-sodium soy sauce
- ¼ Cup water
- 1 Tablespoon honey
- 1 Tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 ½ Tablespoons canola oil
- 2 cloves minced garlic
- 1 LB boneless chicken breast, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 small white onion, cut into wedges (about 1/8-inch thick)
- 3 medium carrots, peeled and thinly sliced diagonally
- 1 ½ cups small broccoli florets
- 1 medium red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3 cups cooked brown rice



*Recipe courtesy of USA Rice*

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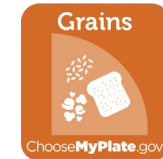
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### Pasta E Fagioli (Pasta Bean Soup)

**Preparation/Cook Time:** 30 minutes **Number of Servings:** 4

#### Ingredients:

- 1 small fennel bulb
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 ounces whole wheat, medium-sized pasta, such as wagon wheels or rotini (½ cup)
- 1 ½ cups reduced sodium vegetable juice
- 1-14.5 oz can fire-roasted diced or crushed tomatoes, undrained
- 1-15 to 16 oz can no-salt-added navy beans, rinsed, drained
- ½ cup frozen peas
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- **Optional:** ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- **Optional:** ½ cup crumbled feta cheese



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### **Pasta E Fagioli (Pasta Bean Soup)**

#### **Directions:**

1. Chop enough fennel bulb to yield 1 cup.
2. Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add chopped fennel and cook 4 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Stir in garlic and cook 1 minute. Add broth and pasta; then bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered 5 minutes. Stir in vegetable juice, diced tomatoes, beans, peas, and if desired, pepper flakes.
4. Return to a simmer; cook 10 minutes or until pasta and fennel are tender, stirring occasionally. Ladle into shallow bowls; top with feta cheese (if using).

#### **Nutrition Facts (per serving):**

Calories: 208 Protein: 14.5gm Total Carbohydrates: 43gm  
Fiber: 10.6gm Total Fat: 9gm Cholesterol: 25mg Sodium: 768mg

*Recipe courtesy of Oldways Whole Grains Council*

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#### **Directions:**

1. Mix soy sauce, water, honey, and cornstarch in a small bowl; set aside.
2. Heat oil in a large skillet. Add minced garlic; sauté about one minute until a golden color. Add chicken; cook about 5-6 minutes then push the chicken to the side.
3. Add onions, carrots, broccoli, and peppers to center of the skillet and cook until slightly tender.
4. Pour soy sauce mixture into center of skillet. Leaving other ingredients at the sides of the pan, stir sauce until it thickens. Mix in with vegetables and chicken. Serve over cooked brown rice.

#### **Nutrition Facts (per serving):**

Calories: 490 Protein: 39gm Total Carbohydrates: 61gm  
Fiber: 6gm Total Fat: 10gm Cholesterol: 75mg Sodium: 680mg

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### **Brown Rice with Sizzling Chicken & Vegetables**

#### **Directions:**

1. Mix soy sauce, water, honey, and cornstarch in a small bowl; set aside.
2. Heat oil in a large skillet. Add minced garlic; sauté about one minute until a golden color. Add chicken; cook about 5-6 minutes then push the chicken to the side.
3. Add onions, carrots, broccoli, and peppers to center of the skillet and cook until slightly tender.
4. Pour soy sauce mixture into center of skillet. Leaving other ingredients at the sides of the pan, stir sauce until it thickens. Mix in with vegetables and chicken. Serve over cooked brown rice.

#### **Nutrition Facts (per serving):**

Calories: 490 Protein: 39gm Total Carbohydrates: 61gm  
Fiber: 6gm Total Fat: 10gm Cholesterol: 75mg Sodium: 680mg