

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

---

Historical Materials from University of  
Nebraska-Lincoln Extension

Extension

---

1993

## NF93-119 Food Guide Pyramid Breads, Cereals, Rice and Pasta

Linda S. Boeckner

University of Nebraska--Lincoln, lboeckner1@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist>



Part of the [Agriculture Commons](#), and the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#)

---

Boeckner, Linda S., "NF93-119 Food Guide Pyramid Breads, Cereals, Rice and Pasta" (1993). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 413.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/413>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.



# NebFact



Published by Cooperative Extension, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources,  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

## Food Guide Pyramid *Breads, Cereals, Rice and Pasta*

---

*Linda Boeckner, Extension Nutrition Specialist, Panhandle Research and Extension Center*

---

### Overview

The United States Department of Agriculture's Food Guide Pyramid outlines foods that individuals aged two and over should eat each day. This general nutrition guide encourages Americans to eat a variety of foods from each of five basic food groups. Foods in each group provide important nutrients, and individuals need to eat foods from each group daily in order to get the necessary amounts of these essential nutrients.

This fact sheet provides a closer look at the **Breads, Cereals, Rice and Pasta Group**. The Pyramid recommends getting six to 11 servings of breads, cereals or other grain products each day.

### Fitting Grains Into Your Daily Plan

Foods in the bread and cereal group come in a variety of forms from crackers, rolls and pancakes to spaghetti. If you are looking for variety in your food choices, this food group can certainly provide it.

Breads and other grain foods have been labeled by some as "fattening". However, it is what you add to these foods that adds fat and extra calories. Use spreads, sauces and gravies sparingly with bread and cereal products, or use low-fat or fat-free products. Concentrate on selecting a wide variety of breads, rolls, pasta and rice dishes that are made with less fat.

Baked goods containing extra sugar and fat such as doughnuts, cookies and cakes fit into this food group. Frequently, recipes for baked goods can be changed to use less fat and sugar. To reduce the fat in a favorite recipe, begin by reducing fat one or two tablespoons at a time. You may also reduce sugar by 1/4 to 1/3 without changing product flavor or texture too much. For those who don't like to experiment, many recipe books are available featuring bakery products with reduced fat and sugar.

Those interested in getting more dietary fiber should focus on whole grain products within the breads,

cereals, rice and pasta food group. Whole grain breads, bran cereals and other whole grain foods can easily provide more than half of the recommended daily levels of dietary fiber. If your current diet does not include many fiber-rich foods, introduce them slowly. Be sure to drink from six to eight glasses of water or other liquids when you increase fiber-rich foods in your diet.

- Bagels
- Biscuits
- Breads, enriched white or whole grain
- Buns, hamburger
- Cake
- Cereals, ready to eat
- Cereals, cooked
- Cookies
- Crackers
- Croissants
- Doughnuts
- Macaroni
- Muffins
- Pancakes
- Pastries
- Pies
- Rice
- Rolls, dinner or cinnamon
- Spaghetti
- Tortillas

### **Why Include Grains?**

Foods made from cereal grains provide starches, or complex carbohydrates, which provide an excellent energy source, especially for those on low-fat diets. Current dietary recommendations suggest that more than half of food energy (calories) should come from carbohydrates, including complex carbohydrates. Carbohydrates have less than half the energy value of fats.

Breads, cereals and pasta made from whole grains are also a source of fiber. Fiber helps to regulate bowel function and relieve constipation. Fiber may be a protective factor for coronary heart disease and certain types of cancer. Foods rich in dietary fiber act as a "filler" and may help with weight management.

Foods from this food group provide many of the essential B vitamins, which play important roles in the body's enzyme systems, aiding energy utilization and the growth processes. Enriched breads and cereals are also a source of iron. Iron is a part of hemoglobin which supplies oxygen to body cells.

### **Grains at Different Life Stages**

Infants Dietitians and doctors recommend cereals as the first food to be added to infant diets. This typically begins when the infant is between four to six months old and has some control over head, neck, mouth and tongue movements. Begin with a mild cereal such as rice, and introduce other types of infant cereals slowly and one at a time. Towards their first birthday, infants will begin to eat cereals and breads with more texture to challenge their chewing skills. It is not necessary to add spreads or jellies to bread.

Toddlers and Preschool Children By their second birthday, young children should be eating at least six servings of breads, cereals and other grain products each day. They are able to feed themselves and handle small servings. The serving size for children from age two to six is:

- 1/2 slice of bread
- 1/4 cup cooked cereal, rice or pasta
- 1/3 cup dry cereal
- 1/2 roll or muffin

School-Aged Children to Adult Individuals in this group should consume six to 11 servings of cereal, rice, pasta, breads and other grain products each day. The number of servings will depend on energy needs due to growth stages and activity levels. For school-aged children and adults, a serving from this group is as follows:

- 1 slice of bread
- 1/2 hamburger bun or English muffin
- 1 ounce of dry cereal (ranges from 1/4 to 1 cup)
- 1/2 cup cooked cereal, rice or pasta

## Summary

Grain products such as breads, cereals, bakery items, macaroni, spaghetti and others are energy-rich foods. These foods can add variety and texture to diets. Eating six to 11 servings each day will provide important nutrients and help meet energy requirements.

## References

- United States Department of Agriculture, Human Nutrition Information Service. *The Food Guide Pyramid*, Home and Garden Bulletin No. 252. Washington, D.C. August 1992.

---

***File NF119 under FOODS AND NUTRITION***  
***A-1d, Buying***  
***Issued April 1993***

---

*Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Elbert C. Dickey, Director of Cooperative Extension, University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.*

*University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension educational programs abide with the non-discrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.*