What is a Whole Grain?
Whole grains consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel. The kernel has three parts—the bran, the germ, and the endosperm. Usually the kernel is cracked, crushed, or flaked during the milling process. If the finished product retains the same relative proportions of bran, germ, and endosperm as the original grain, it is considered a whole grain.

When you see the following words, you will know that, by regulation (Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Standards of Identity), they describe whole grains that are used as ingredients:
- Cracked wheat
- Crushed wheat
- Whole-wheat flour
- Graham flour
- Entire-wheat flour
- Bromated whole-wheat flour
- Whole durum wheat flour

Common and usual names for other whole grains are noted below:
- The word whole listed before a grain, for example, whole corn
- The words berries and groats are also used to designate whole grains, for example, wheat berries, or oat groats
- Rolled oats and oatmeal (including old-fashioned, quick-cooking, and instant oatmeal)
- Other whole-grain products that do not use the word “whole” in their description, for example, brown rice, brown rice flour, or wild rice

Refer to the next page for a more comprehensive list of whole grains.

Grain products (ingredients) that are not whole grains:
Flour has been designated by the FDA as the term for refined wheat flour. The following ingredients are not whole grains:

- flour
- white flour
- wheat flour
- all-purpose flour
- unbleached flour
- bromated flour
- enriched bromated flour
- enriched flour
- instantized flour
- phosphated flour
- self-rising flour
- self-rising wheat flour
- enriched self-rising flour
- bread flour
- cake flour
- durum flour
- corn grits
- hominy grits
- hominy
- farina
- semolina
- degenerated corn meal
- enriched rice
- rice flour
- couscous

This fact sheet was adapted from the USDA fact sheet Serve More Whole Grains for Healthier School Meals and the HealthierUS School Challenge Training Handout 2.1 from NFSMI. MyPlate is the new food icon from USDA.
List of Common Whole Grains

While this list is extensive, it is NOT comprehensive and therefore may not contain all possible representations of whole-grain ingredient names on food labels.

**WHEAT (RED)** - the most common kind of wheat in the U.S.
- wheat berries
- whole-grain wheat
- cracked wheat or crushed wheat
- whole-wheat flour
- bromated whole-wheat flour
- stone ground whole-wheat flour
- toasted crushed whole wheat
- whole-wheat pastry flour
- graham flour
- entire wheat flour
- whole durum flour
- whole durum wheat flour
- whole-wheat flakes
- sprouted wheat
- sprouted wheat berries
- bulgur (cracked wheat)
- whole bulgur
- whole-grain bulgur

**BARLEY**
- whole barley
- whole-grain barley
- whole-barley flakes
- whole-barley flour
- whole-grain barley flour
- dehulled barley
- dehulled-barley flour

**CORN**
- whole corn
- whole-corn flour
- whole-grain corn flour
- whole-grain cornmeal
- whole cornmeal
- whole-grain grits

**WHEAT (WHITE)**
- whole white wheat
- whole white wheat flour

**Oats**
- whole oats
- oat groats
- oatmeal or rolled oats
- whole-oat flour

**BROWN RICE**
- brown rice
- brown-rice flour

**WILD RICE**
- wild rice
- wild-rice flour

**RYE**
- whole rye
- rye berries
- whole-rye flour
- whole-rye flakes

**LESS COMMON GRAINS:** to be whole grains, “whole” must be listed before the grain name.
- einkorn
- Kamut®
- emmer (faro)
- teff
- triticale
- spelt
- buckwheat
- amaranth
- sorghum (milo)
- millet
- quinoa