

## It's Not the Carbs

### How grains fit into the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*

The *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and food guidance system, MyPyramid, were designed to help Americans make informed choices about food and physical activity that could help them live healthier lives. Use the following tips to help your readers understand the *2005 Dietary Guidelines* and the value of grain-based foods in all diets.

- **Every food has its place:** Consuming a balanced diet, with foods from all food groups, is key to maintaining wellness and a healthy lifestyle. Despite the recent low-carb craze, the *2005 Guidelines* recognize it is not carbohydrates that make a person gain weight, but eating more than the body needs of any food that has the potential to add weight to the body.
- **Make half your grains whole:** Unfortunately, Americans average less than one serving of whole grains per day. The *2005 Dietary Guidelines* suggest that at least half the grains we consume should come from whole grains; we should consume three or more ounce equivalents of whole grain products per day. It's easy to add more whole grains to your diet — just look for the following items on your next trip to the grocery store: whole wheat cereal, whole wheat bread, whole wheat crackers, whole wheat pasta, wild rice, oatmeal or popcorn.
- **Room for enriched:** Although the *2005 Dietary Guidelines* encourage consumers to make half their grains whole, that leaves plenty of room for enriched and fortified grains in a healthy diet. Remember that refined grain products also have significant health benefits and are an essential source of many nutrients, minerals (such as iron and magnesium), dietary fiber, and B vitamins, including folate, thiamin, niacin, and riboflavin.
- **One size doesn't fit all:** The new food guide image, MyPyramid, is designed to adjust to the different dietary needs of each individual. Visit [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) to find out how many ounces of grains are right for you based on your age, gender, and level of physical activity. You also can learn how to recognize an ounce of your favorite grain foods. For example, one ounce is equivalent to a slice of bread, a cup of breakfast cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, cereal, or pasta.
- **Putting the *Guidelines* into practice:** Knowledge itself is not enough — it is what you do with the information that truly makes a difference. Once you know how many ounces of grains are right for your body, you can plan meals and snacks that ensure you receive the whole and enriched grains your body needs. Check out [www.wheatfoods.org](http://www.wheatfoods.org) to find great grain-based recipes.