

## Jackson County Department of Public Health

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2015-29  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
April 24, 2015

### THE IMPORTANCE OF WHOLE GRAINS

People who eat whole grains on a daily basis as part of a healthy diet, tend to have a reduced risk of many chronic diseases. Grains are loaded with nutrients which include fiber, thiamin, niacin, riboflavin, and folate. Grains also contain minerals such as iron, magnesium, and selenium. Dietary fiber that comes from whole grains helps to reduce cholesterol levels and may even lower risk of heart disease. Fiber is beneficial for proper bowel function and is helpful in reducing constipation. The B vitamins in whole grains help the body release energy from fats, proteins and carbohydrates. The iron helps to carry oxygen to the blood, magnesium is noted for building bones and the release of energy from the muscles. Selenium beefs up the immune system.

Foods high in fiber such as whole grains help to provide a feeling of being full with less calories. It is recommended that you choose whole grains for at least half your daily servings for weight maintenance. Grains are easy to incorporate into the diet by adding whole wheat toast or bagel to breakfast, a sandwich made on whole wheat bread at lunch and brown rice or whole wheat pasta with dinner. It is recommended that three to eight ounces of grains are consumed each day, depending on how many calories a person needs, and half of these should be whole grains.

Whole grains are just one of the several healthy food options available on the North Carolina WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Supplemental Nutrition Program. WIC can provide your family with healthy foods and education to promote good nutrition for a lifetime. The Jackson County WIC Program located in the Jackson County Department of Public Health is currently taking applications. Please call 828-587-8243 to see if your family qualifies for WIC Services and to schedule an appointment.

**WIC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.**

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