

**PENNY SAVER NEWS**

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Yes, there's yet another little logo stamp on our food packages, and it's not old fashioned Green Stamps. We've had the Healthy Heart logo for some time now. Then the animal care certification for eggs came along. Now there's a Whole Grain Stamp, from the Whole Grains Council. Look for it on some brands of breads and cereals coming to a store near you.

What does this one mean? Actually there are three varieties. A 'Good Source' Whole Grain Stamp means that the food contains at least 8 grams of whole grain in each serving. An 'Excellent Source' Whole Grain Stamp guarantees at least 16 grams of whole grain per serving. Finally, the '100%/Excellent Source' stamp means that *all* the grain in that product is whole grain.

What difference will these make? It depends on if we use them, but the timing is great. The new 2005 Dietary Guidelines recommend specifically that we get at least 3 servings of whole grains a day. One serving is 16 grams of whole grain. So, one serving of a food with an Excellent or 100% stamp would count as one of those three. Two servings of a Good source would count as 1 serving of whole grain.

Notice that this refers to *whole grain*, not to fiber. Whole grains provide much more fiber than do refined and enriched grain products, but the recommendations for fiber are different. How much fiber we need is based on how much we eat. For every one thousand calories we eat, we should get at least 14 grams of fiber. So, a woman eating 1500 calories a day should aim for at least 21 grams of fiber, but an active man

eating 3000 calories needs 42 grams of fiber.

All adults, no matter how many calories we eat, need to aim for 3 servings of whole grains a day. If you only eat 3 servings of grain each day, they should all be whole grains. If you eat 10 servings of grain, at least 5 should be whole grain. Why the big emphasis on whole grains? Because some products are made with refined flours, then have extra bran added. Adding bran alone does not replace all the other nutrients that whole grains contain, but the label can still call it “high fiber!”.

Because of the vitamins, minerals and other phytonutrients they have, whole grains in the diet reduce our risk of heart diseases. They help us maintain a healthy weight. They help prevent constipation. They seem to help reduce the risk of certain cancers. They can help lower blood pressure.

There are plenty of different whole grains to choose from. Besides the common whole wheat and oatmeal, we can choose whole-grain corn and corn meal, popcorn (a whole grain snack!), brown rice, whole rye, barley, wild rice, buckwheat, bulgar wheat and quinoa (say Keen-wah). At a health foods store you can also find triticale, millet, sorghum, farro, amaranth, emmer, and spelt.

If wheat, corn and oatmeal are the limits of your experience, there's a wide world of new tastes waiting for you. Start with something easy, such as getting brown rice or wild rice instead of white. They will take longer to cook than instant white rice, but they are worth it. Barley is another easily available grain. Looked for a 'lightly pearled' version. This makes a wonderful addition to beef stew or vegetable soup. When you're ready for the more exotic, try an amaranth cereal, or the Peruvian grain quinoa.

This week's recipe uses dried vegetable soup mix for the flavoring, but you can use tomatoes with peppers or Italian-style if you want more spice. It's easy to throw

together. Let it simmer while you get the rest of dinner ready.

### Barley Minestrone

1 pkg (4 oz) dried vegetable soup mix	5 cups water
½ cup quick cooking barley	2 cups sliced zucchini or yellow squash
1 - 19 oz can white beans	1 - 14.5 oz can tomatoes, no salt added

Parmesan cheese

In large pan over high heat, bring water, soup mix and barley to boil. Simmer 10 min., stirring occasionally. Add zucchini or yellow squash and simmer 5 minutes more. Drain and rinse the beans. Add beans and tomatoes to soup and simmer 5 more minutes or until barley is tender. Garnish each bowl with a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese. Serves four. To use regular barley, increase cooking time to 40 minutes before adding other ingredients.

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