The Whole Truth About Whole Grain

What is a whole grain?

A grain kernel has three main parts; a core layer called the germ, the middle layer called the endosperm and an outer layer called the bran. The bran and the germ are where most of the vitamins and minerals are. Whole grains contain all three layers of the grain kernel and may be healthier for you. When the outer layer and the core are removed, the grain is called a refined grain. Enriched grains refer to refined grains that have had some vitamins and minerals added back to them. Not all refined grains are enriched with vitamins, so some refined grains are missing important nutrients.

Whole grains are higher in fiber, which is a type of carbohydrate that people do not absorb. Instead, it acts like a broom in the intestines. Fiber is important for maintaining a healthy weight, helps keep our energy stable throughout the day, it also helps us feel full and satisfied. Fiber can also help reduce constipation, may reduce diabetes and helps to prevent heart disease. Other foods high in fiber include whole fruits, vegetables, and beans.

In order to add more whole grains to the menus, Department of Corrections now makes biscuits, tortillas and pizza with whole grains instead of refined grains.

Brown rice, which contains more nutrients than white rice, is also served.

What is the status of hot breakfast?
Governor Inslee’s proposed supplemental budget includes funding for the additional cost necessary to provide the hot breakfasts at the three facilities who currently lack them. DOC is working to secure funding in the Legislature's final budgets.

What’s new with the menus?
The Research and Development Lab (see article below) is in the final stages of developing a calzone (basically a pizza folded in half). They have been successfully piloted at various facilities and are nearly ready to be included on a future menu.

Feature: Fun Food Facts.
Did you know that Thomas Jefferson made pasta popular in the U.S.? Thomas Jefferson is responsible for bringing the first macaroni machine over to the U.S. after spending time in France. He was also the one who introduced macaroni and cheese to Americans!

New Feature: Menu Product Development and Item Selection

Correctional Industries Technical Services - CITS - Food Product Research & Development Lab:
The Food Services Newsletter will be adding a new feature in upcoming editions to highlight the product development at CI’s Research and Development (R&D) Lab at Airway Heights Corrections Center.

Incarcerated individuals working hand in hand with CI staff perform the functions of new product development.

They perform all aspects of a complete food item from the beginning steps of a creative suggestion, to a first test run; and then continue through the development and enhancing steps until it passes the ‘Sensory’ phase, a science-based approach of quality evaluation.

The team continues to work with the manufacturing department until the new product is passed on to a DOC facility for customer trial. (See June 2018 Newsletter for the Six Steps of DOC Product Development)

There are multiple new food items in consideration at all times; and current menu items under quality review, that are active in a monthly process.

Future editions of this newsletter will state the new items in consideration and at what step in the process they are in, so individuals can look forward to new selections.