

Total Nutrition

Shopping For Health

(NAPSA)—Like many teens, my sons read the cereal box panels at breakfast. A few weeks ago, they noticed the health claims on our Whole Grain Total cereal box and asked me what they meant. You may be wondering the same thing.



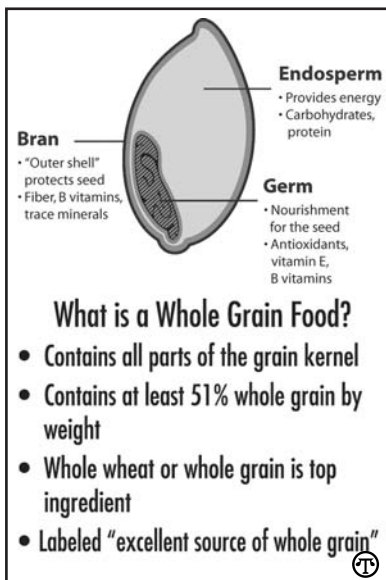
Mindy Hermann

Health claims on food packages help people shop for foods that are linked with prevention of certain diseases. “Several approved health claims pertaining to the health benefits of whole grains will help consumers make wise food choices,” says Kathleen Zelman, M.P.H., R.D., director of nutrition for WebMD Health.

- Grain products, fruits, and vegetables may lower cancer risk when they are included in a low-fat diet. A diet that is high in fat increases risk of developing certain types of cancer.

- Diets that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol and rich in fruits, vegetables, and grain products that contain some types of dietary fiber, particularly soluble fiber, may reduce the risk of heart disease. Oats are a good grain source of soluble fiber.

- Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods and low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers. This health claim specifies that benefits come from eating whole grain foods rather than all grain foods.



Ms. Zelman points out that while a health claim about foods with calcium and bone health does not mention grains, “a breakfast of whole grain cereal with low-fat milk and fresh fruit is an ideal way to start the day because fortified cereal and milk provide calcium, along with protein and a whole host of vitamins, minerals and fiber to meet your nutritional needs and keep you feeling full all morning.”

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines and MyPyramid food guidance system emphasize the importance of eating whole grain foods. They recommend including at least three servings a day of whole grains in place of processed grain foods. Health claims can help you find all-important whole grain foods.

