

Massachusetts Center for Agriculture

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Improving Plant Food: Fruit, Vegetable & Whole Grain, Availability & Intake in Older Adults

Issue

Despite the importance of fruit, vegetable and whole grain intake in maintaining health and functional status, older adults are not meeting minimum dietary recommendations. This project examines behavioral approaches to encourage older adults to increase their intakes of these beneficial foods.

Impact

Preliminary analysis indicates that while many respondents were aware of whole grains, some had misinformation about the meaning of this term. When asked what foods they think of when we use the term "whole grain", about half of subjects mentioned breads and cereals in general. While many participants mentioned whole wheat or whole grain bread, only some

respondents listed particular grains such as barley or oats. In contrast, some subjects considered fruits, vegetables, beans, peas and nuts when thinking about the term "whole grain." Nutritional misinformation was also noted; two such messages were: "Whole grain means no additives" "No saturated or trans-fats." The fiber content was also frequently mentioned. Subjects used a variety of sources of information to learn about whole grains - magazines were cited most frequently; the food label and newspapers were also an important source. Analysis of these data will continue in to determine additional perceptions and food choice factors related to older adults consuming more whole grains. These results will be useful in designing educational interventions and policy recommendations to increase whole grain consumption in older adults.

Primary impact area(s)

- Research
- Education
- Extension

Funding sources

- Hatch

Topics

- Grain intake
- Nutrition education
- Elderly

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