

## Six Things Message Series

### Six Things Everyone Should Know About Wheat

- **There is no genetically engineered wheat in today's food system.**
  - Today's wheat varieties have been developed through conventional breeding over the last 150 years. There is no wheat in today's food system that was grown from seeds that include genes from unrelated species.
- **Wheat provides 20% of the protein consumed by 4.5 billion people across the globe.<sup>1</sup>**
  - It is estimated the number of people worldwide will increase from nearly 7 to more than 9 billion by 2050 and wheat will be a vital source of nutrients to support this booming population.
- **Conventional breeding of wheat has yielded wheat that is easier to grow and thrives in different – even difficult – environments, helping to ensure enough food to feed the world's growing population.**

Farmers and scientists have worked together for hundreds of years to develop wheat that makes better use of the land, water and fertilizer and is more resistant to damaging pests and diseases so that all the world's people will have enough food.
- **Today's wheat has the same genetic components as its ancient ancestors that were consumed by humans more than 8,000 years ago**
  - While some modern wheat plants are shorter than their ancestors, wheat's genetic makeup remains the same. Shorter plants are generally preferred because they utilize nutrients and water more efficiently to produce grain.
- **Wheat won a Nobel Peace Prize.**
  - Dr. Norman Borlaug, one of the world's preeminent plant breeders, was awarded the 1970 Nobel Peace Prize for his work to develop high-yielding varieties of grain that are credited with saving over a billion people from starvation.
- **Fortification of enriched wheat flour with folic acid was named one of the top public health achievements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>2</sup>**
  - Folic acid fortification has been credited with reducing birth defects by one-third in the United States.

For additional information on wheat and wheat foods, visit [www.wheatfoods.org](http://www.wheatfoods.org)

## Six Things Everyone Should Know About Wheat in Our Diet

- **Wheat goes back to the cradle of civilization.**
  - Wheat was one of the first cultivated grains, which allowed our human ancestors to build cities and develop modern civilization. Wheat is the foundation of many wholesome, healthful products enjoyed across the globe, and has been for thousands of years.
- **Wheat provides energy.**<sup>3</sup>
  - The complex carbohydrates found in bread and other foods made from wheat provide fuel the human body needs. Carbohydrates are the body's preferred fuel source.
- **Wheat flour is a vehicle for vitamins and minerals and an important source of carbohydrates, fiber, magnesium, B vitamins, folic acid, antioxidants and phytochemicals.**
  - These nutrients contribute positively to health and can help prevent many of the chronic diseases plaguing the world today, such as heart disease, diabetes, some cancers and neural tube birth defects.
- **The average, healthy adult should consume six one-ounce servings of grain foods each day. Approximately three-quarters of all U.S. grain products are made from wheat flour.**
  - The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which are the gold standard for scientifically-sound nutrition advice, recognize that both whole and enriched grain products have a place in a balanced diet and call for individuals to "make half your grains whole grains."<sup>4</sup>
- **Wheat provides approximately 20% of the protein for more than half of the world's population.**<sup>1</sup>
  - Wheat is the basis of important staple foods in both developing and developed nations across the globe. As a food group, grains provide Americans more than half their daily intake of iron, thiamin and folate, nutrients essential for energy and good health.
- **People don't get celiac disease simply because they eat wheat.**
  - There are a number of theories to explain the increased rates of celiac disease and gluten sensitivity. Researchers are learning more each day but the fact remains that you must have a specific gene to develop celiac disease.

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## Six Things Everyone Should Know About Diet & Weight

- **There is no correlation between wheat consumption and obesity rates.**<sup>5,6</sup>
  - Per capita consumption of wheat has declined in the United States, while obesity rates have gone up. In France, wheat consumption is 50% greater than that of the U.S., but the obesity rate is a third. Italians consume more than double the amount of wheat and have one-quarter the obesity rate of the U.S.
- **There is no magic bullet for achieving or maintaining a healthy weight....except a diet with the right amount of calories for you as well as regular physical activity.**
  - Fad diet plans aren't grounded in sound science and often rely on an author's anecdotes. A balanced diet with moderate portions that includes all food groups coupled with daily exercise is the best solution for long term health and weight management.
- **Most fad dieters can only stick with a plan for a few weeks or months.**
  - It is possible to lose weight quickly by following fad diets that eliminate entire food groups. While you may lose weight in the short run, these diets aren't sustainable and don't work in the long run. Yo-yo dieting, the ongoing, repeated cycle of weight loss & regain, is associated with more weight gain over time.<sup>7</sup>
- **Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight can have transformative health effects.**
  - Moderate weight loss is the number one recommendation of diabetes experts around the world. Studies show weight loss can also improve other conditions, including sleep apnea, acid reflux and some rashes.
- **Carbohydrate intake is key for a healthy weight.**
  - Research indicates people with moderate- to high-carb diets tend to weigh less than people who consume fewer carbs.<sup>8</sup>
  - According to the Institute of Medicine, people should consume about half (45-65%) of their daily calories from carbohydrates. Grains (like wheat) as well as fruits, vegetables, legumes and dairy products are all important sources of carbohydrates.
- **No single food or food group is responsible for the global obesity epidemic.**
- **The human diet is complex and varied. Blaming one food for an epidemic is a gross oversimplification.**

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