

Whole Grain-Rich Items - Rice and Pasta Count Too!

It is important to know how recipes contribute toward the Grains component. The appearance of serving sizes can be deceptive, so guessing just does not work! Group H of the Whole Grain-Rich Ounce Equivalency Requirements for School Meal Programs shows us how to credit pastas and rice. It shows a full or half serving as follows:

- 1 oz equivalent = 1/2 cup cooked or 28 grams dry (1 oz.)
- 1/2 oz equivalent = 1/4 cup cooked or 14 grams dry (0.5 ounces)

Plain, cooked products are credited by volume. For example:

- 1/2 cup steamed brown rice provides 1 oz. equivalent
- 1 cup spaghetti noodles provides 2 oz. equivalent

Mixed dishes such as Macaroni Salad cannot be credited by volume because a 1/2 cup serving of Macaroni Salad contains vegetables and salad dressing. Lasagna contains noodles plus tomatoes, ground beef and cheese. The pasta in these items cannot be measured once they are combined with other ingredients. Usually, dry pasta or rice is added to a recipe. To determine how many ounce equivalents are in a portion of these menu items, we have to do some basic calculations. You must know the portion size and exactly how many portions the recipe makes. After you have done the calculations, be sure to write the information on the recipe card and the "Custom" Meal Pattern Contribution Chart.

Example 1: Macaroni Salad:

The recipe calls for 2 lbs. of whole wheat macaroni for 50-1/2 cup servings.

1. Convert dry weight to ounces (16 oz = 1 lb.) 2 lbs. x 16 oz/lb. = 32 oz. macaroni
2. Divide total ounces by number of servings 32 oz / 50 servings = 0.64 oz dry macaroni/serving
3. Divide oz of dry pasta by 1.0 oz. equivalent 0.64 oz / 1.0 oz equivalent = 0.64 oz equivalent per portion

Answer: Referring to the WG Eq. Chart, 0.64 oz. equivalent per portion is less than 0.75 (or 3/4) oz. equivalent and more than 0.5 (or 1/2) oz. equivalent. Therefore, each serving of Macaroni Salad contributes 1/2 oz. equivalent per portion.

Example 2: Lasagna:

The recipe calls for 2 lb. 4 oz of lasagna noodles for 60 - 6 oz. servings.

1. Convert dry weight to ounces (16 oz = 1 lb.) 2 lbs. x 16 oz/lb. = 32 oz + 4 oz = 36 oz
2. Divide total ounces by number of servings 36 oz / 60 servings = 0.6 oz dry noodles per portion
3. Divide oz of dry pasta by 1.0 oz 0.6 oz / 1.0 oz = .60 oz. equivalent per portion

Answer: Referring to the WG Eq. Chart, 0.60 oz. equivalent per portion is less than 0.75 (or 3/4) oz. equivalent and more than 0.5 (or 1/2) oz. equivalent, therefore, each serving of lasagna contributes 1/2 oz. equivalent per portion.

Example 3: Chicken Rice Soup

The recipe calls for 10 oz of dry brown rice for 50-8 fluid ounce servings.

1. Convert dry weight to ounces (16 ounces = 1 lb.) 10 ounces of rice was used
2. Divide total ounces by number of servings 10 oz / 50 servings = 0.2 ounces dry rice per portion
3. Divide oz of dry rice by 1.0 oz 0.2 oz / 1.0 oz = 0.20 oz. equivalent per portion

Answer: Referring to the WG Eq. Chart, 0.20 oz. equivalent per portion is less than .25 (or 1/4) oz. equivalent. Since 1/4 oz. equivalent is the smallest contribution to the meal pattern, this 8 oz bowl of soup contributes no grain servings to the meal.