



Brown Rice in WIC Package FAQ

for WIC Directors and Agencies

Q: What is designated in USDA’s Interim Final Rule for whole grain brown rice?

A: 16 and 32 oz. packages of whole grain brown rice (regular, instant or quick cooking) with no added sugars, fats, oils, or salt is an allowable substitute whole grain in new authorized WIC food packages.

Q: What are the standard package sizes available for whole grain brown rice?

A: 14, 16, 28 and 32 oz. brown rice products are generally the standard sizes that are widely available nationwide. Instant/quick cooking brown rice products are available in 14 and 28 oz. packages only.

Q: How are states managing package size flexibility?

A: While 16 oz. and 32 oz. sizes are specified, in review of “standard sizes” for specific categories including brown rice, the standard sizes for brown rice also include 14 and 28 oz. USDA requires that 16 oz. be available in states that list brown rice in order for participants to receive maximum value, however, a range of standard package sizes may be allowed by the states. A majority of states that include brown rice have elected to allow “up to 16 oz.” or “14 – 16 oz.” to provide flexibility and to ensure that WIC participants have choices in the marketplace.

Q: How many states include brown rice on their new approved food lists?

A: 45 states and the District of Columbia now include brown rice.

Q: What are the health benefits of whole grain brown rice?

A: Brown rice is a 100% whole grain food. Whole grains may help reduce heart disease and the risk of certain cancers, and aid in weight maintenance. Like white rice, brown rice is gluten- and cholesterol-free and contains no trans or saturated fat and only a trace amount of fat and sodium.

Q: How does brown rice help WIC participants who have gluten intolerance or Celiac disease?

A: Brown rice is the least allergenic of all grains and is naturally gluten free. Combined with other gluten-free foods, rice provides the foundation for satisfying and nutritious meals.

Q: What “value” does brown rice provide?

A: Beside its nutritional benefits, brown rice is a cost-effective addition to WIC Food Packages. **1 pound of uncooked brown rice makes over 2 pounds of cooked rice** -- about 16 (½-cup) servings. The average cost per pound is \$1.59 – less than 10 cents per ½-cup serving. Brown rice provides great nutrition benefits while helping manage food package cost.

- Q: What should WIC participants look for when shopping for brown rice?**
- A: It's easy to identify allowable brown rice products. Participants should select the correct package size and check the ingredient list which will state only one ingredient – “brown rice”. Shelf talkers”, where allowable, is a helpful way to help WIC participants to find allowable products.
- Q: Where can I find brown rice recipes and nutritional information?**
- A: USA Rice has a web page dedicated to WIC resources at www.usarice.com/wic and also on WIC Works. Since rice partners with a wide variety of nutritious foods, many recipes are designed to include other foods in the WIC food package, like Healthy Rice Bowls, making it easy for WIC participants to prepare nutritious meals.
- Q: How can I contact brown rice companies for information on their products?**
- A: A list of brown rice suppliers is available and downloadable from our website at www.usarice.com/wic. Some companies have brands with national distribution and others may have brands available in specific states/regions. There are also many private label brands available in supermarkets and mass merchandising chains.

Contact Us:

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