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Thursday March 1, 2007

## Moms and kids weigh in on whole-grain goodness trend

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Press & Sun-Bulletin

If you have children, you know they can be brutally honest about anything and everything. That was exactly the case when a group of mothers and Girl Scouts were asked to give their opinions about some whole-grain and whole-wheat snack products last week.

There are countless varieties of these foods on store shelves, which is good news for parents concerned about their family's health.

Nutrition consultant Molly Morgan of Creative Nutrition Solutions in Vestal explained the benefits.

"There is fiber found in the grains, as well as antioxidants. They help to keep you full longer," she said. "It (the fiber) can lead to a possible reduction in the risk of getting cancer, diabetes and heart disease, and also promotes upper digestive health."

However, all of these products leave many consumers wondering the same thing: Do they actually taste good?

During the taste-testing, the mothers and children were asked to evaluate the taste and appearance of Snyder's of Hanover Honey Wheat Sticks, Nabisco's Whole-grain Fig Newtons, Freschetta Multigrain with Wheat Cheese Pizza and Tostitos Multigrain tortilla chips. Each was given a rating on a scale from one to 10 (one being the worst).

Here are the results:

### NABISCO'S WHOLE-GRAIN FIG NEWTONS

The 100 percent whole-grain Fig Newtons didn't rate very high among the testers. Three of the children agreed they didn't like them. Amy Gonzales said that they were "nasty and gross," while Malinda Robinson said that they "taste too much like grains."

When asked how the product could be improved, Courtney Robinson replied: "I don't think this product could taste better if it tried."

Two of the parents, on the other hand, enjoyed the Fig Newtons.

"I would buy the whole-grain rather than the regular for the added grain," said Annette Nestrack.

Phyllis Gonzales said that the product "tasted like regular Fig Newtons I remember, but the wheat 'cake' part was a little less cookie or cake, like the regular ones."



Amy Gonzales, 11, of Endicott, left, and her mother, Phyllis, test the multigrain Tostitos.

REBECCA TOWNS / Press & Sun-Bulletin

### MEET THE TASTE-TESTERS

Annette Nestrack, 37, of Johnson City and Olivia, 7, a second-grader at Johnson City Primary and part of Brownie Troop 338.

Phyllis Gonzales, 50, of Endicott and Amy, 11, a sixth-grader at Jennie F. Snapp Middle School and part of Junior Troop 705.

Carla Robinson, 38, of Chenango Bridge and twins Courtney and Malinda, 14, ninth-graders at Chenango Forks High School and part of Troop 56.

### Can you learn to like it?

Nutrition consultant Molly Morgan said that "over time, people can actually prefer the taste of whole-grain products over refined products."

By simply replacing refined products with whole-wheat or whole-grain counterparts (such as replacing white rice with brown rice), you and your family can benefit from healthy, wholesome foods without sacrificing taste.

Overall rating for the product: 4.1

Nutrition information: Calories: 110, total fat: 2g, total carbohydrates: 21g, dietary fiber: 2g, sugars: 12g, protein: 1g. Cost: \$2.98

### **FRESCETTA MULTIGRAIN WITH WHEAT CHEESE PIZZA**

The Multi-grain pizza was definitely preferred by the testers.

"The crust was good and it had a great flavor," said Carla Robinson.

Daughter Courtney also liked the product. "I like that it's not greasy and that the crust is thick and soft," she said.

Both Olivia Nestruck and Malinda Robinson said that although they liked the multi-grain pizza, they would rather buy a regular pizza if they had a choice.

Overall rating for the product: 7

Nutritional information: Calories: 330, total fat: 11g, total carbohydrates: 41g, dietary fiber: 3g, sugars: 4g, protein: 16g. Cost: \$3.98

### **TOSTITOS MULTIGRAIN TORTILLA CHIPS**

The crispy, crunchy, familiar-tasting Tostitos brand tortilla chips had the best response among the tasters. Almost everyone enjoyed them.

Annette Nestruck appreciated the Tostitos label and packaging, along with the salty taste. Both Annette and Carla Robinson said that the multi-grain version was similar to the original tortilla chips.

The children also preferred the chips compared to the other products.

"The chips tasted good," said Malinda Robinson. "I liked them because they didn't taste like multi-grain items normally do. You couldn't taste the difference."

Overall rating for the product: 8.1

Nutritional information: Calories: 150, total fat: 8g, total carbohydrates: 18g, dietary fiber: 2g, sugars: 1g, protein: 2g. Cost: \$3

### **SNYDER'S HONEY WHEAT STICKS**

"Ewww! I don't like these! They are yucky!" said Olivia Nestruck. This sentiment seemed to be how the majority of the taste-testers felt. While Olivia didn't say exactly why she didn't like the pretzels, others had more specific responses.

"I hate it," said Amy Gonzales. "It has sesame seeds."

The children were not the only ones to dislike the product.

Carla Robinson simply didn't like the taste. When asked if she would buy the product, she said that she wouldn't because "they have a flat cardboard taste, and the added health benefit is not worth the aftertaste."

Although most of the taste-testers didn't prefer the honey wheat sticks, there was one person who did. "The product tastes excellent," said Courtney Robinson. "I like it because of the contrast of flavor, between the wheat and grain, honey flavor and salt. I also like the crispiness."

Overall rating of the product: 3.3

Nutrition information: Calories: 120, total fat: 2g, total carbohydrates: 24g, dietary fiber: 2g, sugars: 4g, protein: 3g. Cost: \$2.39

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