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The Biggest Loser competition will be wrapping up on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and the heat is on! The male division leader is Roger Ray with a total weight loss to date of 8.47%. Creeping up in second place is Bryce Stanley with a total weight loss of 7.75%. The women division leader is Connie Garr with a total weight loss of 9.16% and Paula McCormack is in second place with a 7.38% weight loss. Emily Robbins holds the lead in the "under 19" category with a total loss of 2.51%. All participants have worked hard for their weight loss and the numbers show it!

Weekly winners for the week ending Monday, February 17:

- Total pounds lost to date: 457.9
- Current number of participants: 87
- Female division weekly winner: Connie Garr- 3.51% weight loss
- Male division weekly winner: David Noel- 2.45% weight loss
- Under 19 weekly winner: Emily Robbins- .14% weight loss
- Weekly challenge winner: Paula McCormack

This week's challenge asked participants to incorporate whole grain foods into their diet. . Grains are the basis of a healthy diet. This may come as a surprise to you after years of being told to stay away from foods such as breads, rice, cereal, and pasta. With many mixed messages, it is easy to understand why you might be confused as to how to incorporate grains into a proper eating plan.

Grain products include oatmeal, cereal, rice, bread, flour, tortillas, pasta, crackers, bagels, bran, popcorn, rye, millet, quinoa, and grits.

There are two types: whole and refined. The easiest way to know if what you are eating is whole or refined is to look at your food's packaging. If the food is a whole grain, the ingredient list will state just that – "whole wheat", "whole rye", or "whole grain". Make sure it is listed first or second in the ingredient list. If the food is refined, the ingredient list will include phrases such as "white enriched" or "bleached wheat flour". Also, beware of manufacturers calling their foods "wheat" without the "whole". If a food contains whole grain, it will say so in the ingredient list.

Another way to tell the difference is by checking out the fiber content of the food. Whole grains are high in fiber while refined grains contain little or no fiber. For example, when choosing a breakfast cereal look for "whole" in the ingredient list and two or more grams of fiber per serving.

Grains provide us with carbohydrate, which is our body's main energy source. In fact, our brains and nervous systems use primarily glucose (carbohydrates are broken down by our bodies to produce glucose) for fuel. Whole grains also provide us with insoluble fiber, which is not digested by the body. Dietary intake of high fiber foods helps with weight management and reduces the chances of becoming obese. Fiber is bulky and it fills you up to help you stay satisfied long after eating. In addition, it helps prevent constipation, which can lead to conditions such as diverticulitis. Some grains, such as barley and oats, contain soluble fiber which has been shown to help lower cholesterol levels.

More information may be obtained on fibers and grains at the Putnam County Health Department, 103 N 18<sup>th</sup> St, Unionville.