

Did you know?



WHOLE GRAINS

THE SCOOP ON WHOLE GRAINS

Did you know that eating a diet rich in **whole grains** can lower your risk for heart disease and diabetes? Whole grains contain fiber, vitamin E, and healthy fats. They help keep your blood sugar steady and your arteries clear. Whole grains also make you feel full longer. Refined “white” flour and sugar do not have these nutrients or health benefits. Eat whole grain products instead of refined ones whenever possible. Also avoid the “empty calories” of added sugars. They offer no benefit other than energy.

- Try to serve foods made with **whole grains** (like whole wheat, oats, barley, brown rice, and popcorn), which are higher in fiber and nutrients than refined grains (like white rice, white bread, and cornflakes).
- Refined grains, such as white rice or white flour, have both the bran and germ removed from the grain. Although vitamins and minerals are added back in to refined grains after the milling process, they still don't have as many nutrients as whole grains do, and they don't provide as much fiber.
- Look at the nutrition labels of breads and cereals and aim for products with whole grain as the first ingredient, at least 3 grams of fiber, and no more than 5 grams of sugar per serving.

LOOK FOR WHOLE GRAIN CRACKERS, CEREALS, AND OTHER GRAINS WITH NO ADDED SUGARS

- Whole wheat bread
- Brown rice
- Whole wheat English muffins
- Corn or whole wheat tortillas
- Whole grain crackers
- Whole wheat pita bread

LIMIT THESE PROCESSED FOODS

- Sweetened cereals
- White bread
- Flour tortillas
- White rice, fried potatoes, “instant” grains
- Cookies, cakes, candies

EXAMPLES OF 1 SERVING OF WHOLE GRAINS

- 1 slice whole grain bread
- ½ whole grain English muffin, bagel, or bun
- 1 ounce of ready-to-eat whole grain cereal
- ½ cup (cooked) oatmeal, brown rice, or whole wheat pasta
- 5–6 whole grain crackers
- 3 cups of popped popcorn

WANT TO KNOW MORE? CHECK OUT THESE RESOURCES

Harvard School of Public Health publishes an online nutrition news and resource center:

www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/health-gains-from-whole-grains/index.html

The Whole Grains Council helps consumers find whole grain foods and understand their health benefits:

www.wholegrainscouncil.org

This section of the MyPlate food guidance system gives specific information on grains and can be tailored for individual needs:

www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/grains.html

Planning healthy celebrations can be particularly challenging. Foodplay offers some great suggestions:

www.foodplay.com/downloads/FreeMaterials/Teachers/celebration_guide.pdf