

COOPER Health

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Go With
the Grain

Strike Out
Stroke

Fight Cancer
With Veggies



Go With the

Confused about whole grains? You're not alone. It's impossible to pick up the paper or watch TV without hearing about them. Are they just another food fad, or are they here to stay? With the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans' emphasis on whole grains, yes, whole grains are here to stay. So what are they? Where do we find them? And what do the guidelines recommend?

A whole grain consists of the entire seed of the plant (also called the kernel) and has three grain components — the endosperm, bran and germ. The endosperm provides carbohydrates and protein. The bran delivers fiber, vitamins and minerals, and the germ provides vitamin E, trace minerals and essential fatty acids. Both the bran and germ also contain phytonutrients such as flavonoids, lignans and phytic acid. These are antioxidants that fight damage to cells.

There are two health claims manufacturers can state on product packaging approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

- ▶ Diets that are both rich in whole grains and other plant foods (such as fruits, vegetables and legumes)

and low in saturated fat and cholesterol may help reduce the risk for heart disease.

- ▶ Diets that are high in plant foods are associated with a lower occurrence of coronary heart disease and cancers of the lung, colon, esophagus and stomach.

Furthermore, whole grains have also been shown to help manage weight and optimize blood sugar control.

Look at Labels

Choose foods in which the first ingredient listed contains the word *whole*, such as *whole wheat flour*, *whole-grain oats*, *whole grain* or *stoneground whole grain*. Whole grains include:

- ▶ Amaranth
- ▶ Barley, whole-grain
- ▶ Brown rice
- ▶ Buckwheat
- ▶ Bulgur
- ▶ Corn, whole-grain
- ▶ Cornmeal
- ▶ Millet
- ▶ Oatmeal
- ▶ Oats
- ▶ Popcorn

- ▶ Quinoa
- ▶ Rye, whole-grain
- ▶ Sorghum
- ▶ Spelt
- ▶ Triticale
- ▶ Wheat berries
- ▶ Wheat, cracked
- ▶ Wheat, whole
- ▶ Wild rice

Buyer Beware

Does the package read *multigrain*, *wheat germ*, *wheat flour*, *organic flour*, *seven-grain* or *100% wheat*?

Don't be fooled by wording on product packages. The key is to look for *whole-grain* or *100% whole-grain*. That's different from *made with whole grains*, which could mean that there's either a small or large amount of whole grains.

Beware of high-fiber claims, too. Just because a label says a food is high in fiber doesn't necessarily mean it's full of whole grains. Not all whole grains are high in fiber. Fiber content varies by grain, so just looking at the fiber amount may not be enough.

If a grain isn't a whole grain, then what is it? It's a refined grain. Refined grains and products made with them

Grain

have had parts of the whole grain removed, specifically the bran and germ — valuable components.

The Whole Grains Council has developed a whole grain stamp, which identifies three levels to help consumers identify products:

- ▶ Good source: contains at least one-half serving of whole grains
- ▶ Excellent source: contains one complete serving of whole grains
- ▶ 100% excellent source: contains one complete serving and all grains are whole grains

Get on a Roll With Whole Grains

It's a sad fact, but in 2003, Americans ate on average 10 servings of grains per day — only one of which was whole-grain. The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend three 1-ounce servings per day. Here is what constitutes a serving:

- ▶ 1 slice whole wheat bread
- ▶ $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup whole-grain cereal
- ▶ $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked oatmeal
- ▶ $\frac{1}{2}$ cup whole wheat pasta
- ▶ $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown rice
- ▶ 4 to 6 whole-grain crackers
- ▶ 1 corn or whole wheat tortilla
- ▶ $\frac{1}{2}$ cup corn
- ▶ 3 cups popcorn

Increasing Whole Grain Intake

Now that you know the importance of including whole grains in your diet, consider the following suggestions to increase your consumption of them.

- ▶ Have whole-grain cereal or oatmeal for breakfast instead of a blueberry muffin.
- ▶ Make homemade trail mix by combining whole-grain cereal, nuts, sunflower seeds and dried fruits.
- ▶ Make ricelike dishes, such as pilaf and risotto, with whole grains such as brown rice, bulgur, millet, sorghum, quinoa or barley.

- ▶ Substitute whole wheat flour for white flour in cooking.
- ▶ Mix whole-grain cereal with fat-free yogurt for a snack.
- ▶ Use whole cornmeal for corn cakes, corn breads and corn muffins.
- ▶ Snack on popcorn instead of chips and pretzels.

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