

Get the "Whole" Story



The "whole" story on whole Grains

Whole Grains

As low carbohydrate diets become more popular, it is important to understand consequences of these fad diets. Carbohydrates are the basis of the Food Guide Pyramid and give us energy to perform vital functions including your ability to recall information for tests. When carbohydrates intake decreases, whole grain intake is also greatly reduced.

Whole grains contain good sources of fiber, which is a good component for heart health. Whole grain foods are generally lower in fat and calories, and bulk your stomach to help you stay full longer after a meal. Whole grains also provide significant phytochemicals and antioxidants that help the body fight against disease such as heart disease and certain cancers.

The foundation of a nutritious diet begins with grain products such as cereal, rice, bread and pasta.

How do you get whole grain goodness?

The food guide pyramid (MyPyramid) recommends that adults eat at least 6 servings of whole grains every day and further recommend that at least half of these servings be whole grains. This recommendation is based on the fact that whole grains contain high amounts of fiber that help fight heart disease and certain cancers. The recommended intake of dietary fiber for Americans is 20-30 grams each day. The average American only consumes approximately 10 grams each day. To increase your fiber intake, choose whole grain foods.

Whole grains include all three parts of a grain-- the bran, the germ and the endosperm. These three parts provide a healthy combination of vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytochemicals. When grains are refined, the bran and germ are removed taking away the benefits of the grain.

Tips to help you get more whole grains each day:

Read the labels

Food labels can help you choose more whole grain foods. Make sure to look at the *Ingredient list* and *Nutrition facts*.

Whole grain should be listed as the first or second ingredient. Some other whole grain ingredients to look for include: whole wheat, whole barley, whole oats, cracked wheat, graham flour and whole cornmeal.

Be sure to steer clear of those listing *enriched* or *bleached* flour as the first ingredients. What may appear to be whole wheat bread may actually be enriched white flour with some caramel coloring.

The labels will also help you to determine the amount of fiber in each serving:

- **High Fiber** –5 or more grams per serving
- **Good Source**-3.5-4.9 grams per serving
- **More or added**-at least 2.5 grams per serving

Better Breakfast

Choose cereals that contain at least 3-5 grams of fiber per serving. However, be careful of the sugar content. Many cereals that appear to be whole grain contain larger levels of added sugar, which increases calories. Try to choose cereals with no more than 8 grams of sugar.

Some good cereals to choose include:

Cereal	Serving	Fiber	Sugar
Oatmeal	1/3 c	3g	0 g
All Bran	1/2 c	9g	5 g
Kashi Good Friends	3/4 c	10g	6 g
Fiber 1	1/2 c	14 g	0 g
Kashi Heart to Heart	3/4 c	5 g	5 g

Healthy Whole -Grain Snacks

Stock your pantry with whole grain staples such as whole wheat bread, low fat whole-wheat crackers and cereals. By choosing whole grain snacks, you will be fuller, which will prevent fewer cravings and snacking less throughout the day.

Try these snack ideas:

- Whole-wheat crackers or pretzels with peanut butter
- Granola bars
- Trail Mix-make it yourself! Add bran cereals w/ nuts and raisins for a wholesome snack.
- Make yourself a sandwich on whole wheat bread