

How to Add Whole Grains to Your Diet

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Adding more **whole grains** to your family's meals is a smart move. Not only do they provide vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients needed to keep your family healthy but whole grains also contain **dietary fiber**, which may help reduce your risk of heart disease, some cancers, diabetes and other health problems, such as constipation.

Grains are divided into two subgroups: whole grains and refined grains. Whole grains contain the entire kernel — the bran, germ and endosperm. The *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend making half of the grains you eat whole, so choose whole grains instead of refined-grain products whenever possible.

How to Find Whole Grains

Don't be fooled by colors. Being brown doesn't make bread whole-wheat and being white may not mean that bread is made with just refined white flour. Finding whole-grain bread takes some label reading skills. Any bread labeled "whole wheat" must be made with 100-percent whole-wheat flour.

Also, did you know that even if bread labels advertise "seven grain" or "multigrain," they are not necessarily whole-grain products? Check the ingredients list to make sure whole-wheat flour or some other whole grain is listed as the first ingredient and find loaves made mostly with whole-

wheat or another whole-grain flour.

Add Whole Grains to Your Meals

Want to add more whole grains to your meals? Change your cooking style to include more whole grains and boost the dietary fiber content of meals. Partner whole grains with vegetables — brown rice and vegetable stir-fry or a whole-wheat pita stuffed with salad. Or fortify mixed dishes with high-fiber ingredients — add bran or oatmeal to meat loaf or toss cooked quinoa or wheat berries into a salad.

Looking for other ways to make half your family's grains whole?

- Start with breakfast. Choose a fiber-rich, whole-grain breakfast cereal, **oatmeal** or whole-wheat toast. Check the grams of dietary fiber per serving; more fiber will keep you feeling full longer.
- Choose whole grains over refined items when selecting breads, buns, bagels, tortillas, pastas and other grains.
- Experiment with different grains such as buckwheat, bulgur, millet, **quinoa**, sorghum, whole rye or barley. To save time, cook extra bulgur or barley and freeze half to heat and serve later as a quick side dish.
- Enjoy whole grains as a snack. **Popcorn** is considered a whole-grain and three cups of air-popped popcorn contain 3.5 grams of dietary fiber and only 95 calories. Also, try 100-percent whole-wheat or rye crackers.

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