

FitFuture

strategies for better living.

Series on Fitness & Nutrition for Families

The Whole Story: How to Make Half Your Grains Whole

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Whole grains are the healthy choice, but deciphering a whole grain from a multi-grain or a refined grain can be mind-boggling. Read more about what whole grain really means, and how to incorporate more of them into your family's diet.

What is a Whole Grain?

Whole grains and foods made from whole grains contain three essential parts and all of the naturally-occurring nutrients in these parts. A whole grain seed includes the bran, endosperm and germ. When a grain is cracked, crushed, rolled or cooked it must provide the same balance of nutrients found in the original grain seed in order to retain the "whole grain" title.

Whole Grain Nutrients and Health Benefits

People who eat whole grains regularly have a lower risk of obesity and have lower cholesterol levels. Due to the combinations of nutrients (B-vitamins, trace minerals, antioxidants, phytochemicals and fiber) found in whole grains, those who eat at least three servings a day have reduced risk for developing heart disease, stroke, type II diabetes, and certain types of cancer.

U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans Encourage Whole Grains

All Americans are advised to eat half or more of their grains as whole grains. For Americans age 9 and older, this means eating at least 3 servings of whole grains daily.

What is Equal to an "oz." of Whole Grain?

A serving is defined as any of the following amounts for products in which all grain ingredients are whole grains:

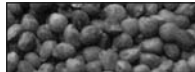
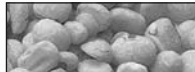
1/2 cup of rice, pasta, or cooked grain

1 slice of bread

1 small muffin (1 oz.)

1 cup ready-to-eat dry cereal

Examples of Whole Grains



CORN

WHEAT BERRIES

BROWN RICE

OATS

Whole grain products made from wheat, rye, barley or other grains are considered grain products. Examples include bread, pasta, cereal, and whole grain flour.

How to Incorporate Whole Grains

1. Swap out refined flour for whole wheat flour in your regular recipes for baked goods.

2. Add a half cup or more of whole wheat berries, wild rice, brown rice or barley to your favorite soup.

3. Add one-quarter cup of oats for each pound of ground beef or turkey when you make meatballs, burgers or meatloaf.

4. Add whole-grain side dishes with barley, brown rice, bulgur, millet, quinoa or other whole grains.