



# Including Whole Grains in Your Meals

## Did You Know?

**Popcorn is a whole grain.** Fill small baggies with air-popped popcorn for an easy, on-the-go snack.



## What makes a whole grain 'whole'?

A whole grain contains all three parts of the grain called the bran, germ and endosperm. Refined grains have had portions taken off so that they will cook quicker or have a smoother consistency. Unfortunately, some other nutrients are removed in the processing.

Whole grains are an essential part of a healthy diet. They contain important nutrients like fiber and are naturally low in fat. Aim for half of your daily grains to be *whole* grains.

**Here are some quick tips to increase the whole grains in your diet:**

### Increase amounts gradually

- For pasta, mix together whole wheat and regular, gradually increasing the amount of whole wheat. Try the same with brown and white rice.
- If you have a favorite refined cereal, try mixing it with a high fiber option.

### Read labels

- When buying whole grain products, make sure a whole grain is the first ingredient listed. Look for items like whole wheat, brown rice, or oatmeal.
- Whole grains are a great source of fiber! Check the nutrition label for a fiber content of 10-20% of the daily recommended value.

### Try using whole wheat flour in baked goods

- Start by replacing half of the all-purpose flour in a recipe, and then experiment with more. Whole wheat pastry flour and white whole wheat flour are also good options to try, and can result in a lighter texture.
- In some recipes (like cookies) oats can make a good flour substitute.

### Use a variety of whole grains

- Use barley for a cold salad or replace your white rice with brown rice, quinoa, or bulgur wheat.

### When making rice or other whole grains, prepare extra

- It's easy to add whole grains to soups and stews or as a base for a quick stir fry dinner.
- Oatmeal keeps in the refrigerator for up to a week. Warm up leftover oatmeal and top with a banana and peanut butter for an easy breakfast.
- Freeze leftovers you don't use right away for up to 6 months.