



**For the week of
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By Martha Filipic
(614) 292-9833

Editor:

This column was reviewed by Jaime Ackerman, registered dietitian and Ohio State University Extension nutrition associate in the College of Human Ecology.

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2021 Coffey Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210-1044
(614) 292-2011

203 Research Services
Building
Wooster, Ohio 44691-4096
(330) 263-3775

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Whole grains a whole lot better

I happen to like whole-wheat bread, brown rice and other whole grains, but I have a hard time convincing my husband to try them. Can you list the reasons why whole grains are better for you?

Whole grains offer numerous benefits over their stripped-down "refined" counterparts. They have more minerals, including trace minerals such as selenium, magnesium, zinc and copper, that most people don't get enough of. And they have more fiber, helping you reach the 25 grams of fiber recommended in a day.

Most researchers have concluded that diets rich in whole grains can reduce the risk of heart disease and some types of cancer. In fact, in 1999, the Food and Drug Administration allowed foods containing 51 percent or more of whole-grain ingredients by weight to make that health claim on their labels, as long as they are also low in total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol. There's also evidence from the long-term Nurses' Health Study that whole-grain foods reduce incidence of stroke in women.

Just recently, a study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* offered more good reason

to choose whole grains. Results indicated that overweight people who eat whole grains appear to be able to better manage blood-sugar concentrations with minimal production of insulin. That helps improve insulin sensitivity, which would help prevent type II diabetes as well as heart disease.

Only 11 people participated in the study, so it will be interesting to see if results are confirmed with additional research. But the results certainly bolster your argument.

Whole-grain foods include some breads and crackers, whole-grain breakfast cereals, oatmeal, pearl barley, bulgur, brown rice, and popcorn.

Be careful, though. You have to read ingredient lists carefully. For example, some bran cereals are whole-grain, others aren't. Check the ingredient list for "whole bran." On all products, look for the words "whole grain," "whole wheat," "cracked wheat," "graham flour" or "whole cornmeal" at the top of the ingredient list. Be on guard for words that do not indicate whole grain, including "multi-grain," "stone-ground," "100% wheat," "seven-grain," "pumpernickel" or "organic."

Chow Line is a service of The Ohio State University. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1044, or filipic.3@osu.edu.