



Lots of reasons to eat healthy whole grains

I know it's recommended that we eat more whole grains. Why are they so healthful?

Scientists are still uncovering all of the merits of whole grains. Basically, the point is that whole-grain foods retain the bran and germ as well as the endosperm or flour portion of the original grain. That makes them better sources of B vitamins, vitamin E, selenium, zinc, copper, magnesium, fiber and other nutrients that are lost when the grain is refined for white rice or white flour.

Even though some vitamins and minerals are added back to refined grains after they go through the milling process, they still aren't as good as the original.

The benefits of eating more whole grains are becoming clearer as scientists continue to examine the evidence. In fact, researchers analyzed several studies totaling 149,000 participants on the relation between whole grains and cardiovascular disease for the journal *Nutrition, Metabolism and Cardiovascular Diseases*. The findings, available online in April 2007, showed a consistent association between eating at least 2.5 servings of whole grains a day and good heart health. The health benefits, researchers found, include a lower incidence of insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes, atherosclerosis, high blood pressure and inflammation.

In addition, the American Institute of Cancer Research suggests that diets

rich in whole grains can reduce the incidence of certain types of cancer. Not only do whole grains contain fiber, vitamins, minerals and natural phytochemicals (plant compounds not designated as "nutrients" that can protect cells from damage that could lead to cancer), but eating more whole grains, fruits, vegetables and beans could reduce the amount of red meat and processed meat in our diet — foods linked to increased cancer risk.

To incorporate more whole-grain foods in your diet, choose:

- Oatmeal or another whole-grain cereal over corn flakes or other low-fiber cereals.
- Whole-wheat or whole-grain breads instead of bread made from refined flour. (Check the package to make sure the word "whole" is associated with the first item in the ingredient listing.)
- Popcorn or whole-grain crackers instead of snacks made from refined grains.
- Brown rice instead of refined white rice, and whole-grain pasta instead of regular pasta.
- Add barley or wild rice to soups, stews and casseroles.

For more ideas, see the Web site of the Whole Grains Council at <http://www.wholegrainscouncil.org>.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu.



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