

Whole Grains

What are Whole Grains? – All grains, when they grow in the field, have 3 parts – the bran, the germ, and the endosperm. All 3 parts are important as they contribute protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals. **“Whole grain”** foods contain ALL 3 of these essential parts. **“Enriched”** foods, on the other hand, contain only the endosperm. The process of refining whole wheat to white enriched flour removes the bran and the germ so fiber, vitamins, minerals, and protein are lost.

Health Benefits of Whole Grains - **Whole grains** are an important source of nutrients like zinc, magnesium, B vitamins, and fiber. People who eat whole grains, as a part of a healthy diet, have a reduced risk of some chronic disease including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer and hypertension. Eating enough whole grains also helps in maintaining a healthy body weight.

How many servings of Whole Grains are best? – The goal is to make at least half of the grains you eat each day **“whole”**. Strive to eat 3 or more 1 oz. servings of whole grains every day. 1 ounce = 1 slice of whole grain bread; ½ cup cooked brown or wild rice; ½ cup cooked whole grain pasta; 1 cup 100% whole grain cereal; or ½ whole wheat hamburger bun or English muffin.

Whole Grains to try – Look for some of these naturally occurring whole grain foods when shopping -

- Amaranth Barley Brown Rice Buckwheat Bulgur
- Corn Farro Kamut Oatmeal Popcorn
- Quinoa Spelt Whole Wheat Cracked Wheat
- Wild Rice Wheatberries

Meals on Wheels – A hot, nutritious meal is the basis of the Meals on Wheels Program. Each of our meals meet at least 1/3 of the Daily Recommended Dietary Allowance for the population we serve. Look for whole grains that may accompany your meal as either a side or as a bread – **Brown Rice, Wild Rice, Quinoa, Barley, Farro, Whole Wheat Bread, Corn.**

Shopping Tips for Whole Grains:

- Search the ingredient list. The 1st ingredient should always be the word **“whole”** if it is a whole grain.
- Don't be fooled by color. Just because something is brown, doesn't mean it's a whole grain.
- Don't be fooled by the name. Just because it says *“wheat”* or *“multigrain”* doesn't mean it's a whole grain.
- Don't be fooled by the label if it states, *“made with whole grains”*. If a whole grain is not listed as the 1st ingredient, there may only be a very small amount added into the product.
- Find the fiber on the label. 3 grams of fiber per serving is a good source of fiber. 5 or more grams per serving is an excellent source of fiber.

Information adapted from: The Whole Grains Council/Oldways Preservation & Exchange Trust. www.wholegraincouncil.org

Dudley 508-949-6640, Franklin 508-520-1422, Milford 508-478-8102, Northbridge 508-234-2002, Southbridge 774-289-9438, Spencer 508-885-5767, Sutton 508-234-0703, Upton 508-529-9094, Uxbridge 774-482-6174, West Brookfield 508-867-1411

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