



From the desk of the Registered Dietitian: Rachel Robinson, RD, Chief Clinical Dietitian

Whole Grains Month

What is a whole grain?

All grains start off as whole grains. When a grain grows, it has three parts: the bran on the outside, the germ on the inside, and the endosperm in the middle. Refining a grain normally involves removing the bran and the germ, leaving only the endosperm. This process usually removes 17 key nutrients and 25% of the grain's protein.

A grain is considered "whole grain" when all three parts of the kernel (in other words, the whole entire grain) are used. Benefits of eating whole grains include:

- Reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer and obesity
- Lower cholesterol levels
- A dose of disease-fighting phytochemicals and antioxidants
- Plenty of B vitamins, vitamin E, magnesium, iron and fiber

How do I know if something is a whole grain?

The best way to know is by reading an ingredients list, if one is available. The items on an ingredient list are listed by weight, so the heaviest most abundant ingredient will be listed first. When purchasing breads, cereals, and other grain products, look for a whole grain as the first ingredient.

What's the different between whole wheat and whole grain?

Whole wheat means that a food is made from all three parts of the kernel of wheat. Whole wheat is one type of whole grain. A whole grain could be any type of grain that is used with all three parts of its kernel.

Some examples of whole grains include oats, wheat, corn, brown rice, barley, and buckwheat.

Ways to enjoy whole grains

- Enjoy oatmeal for breakfast in the morning
- Pair whole wheat pasta with a bag of frozen mixed vegetables for dinner
- Serve a vegetable stir fry with a side of brown rice
- Snack on air popped popcorn sprinkled with nutritional yeast
- Prepare your sandwiches on whole wheat bread or a whole wheat tortilla

