



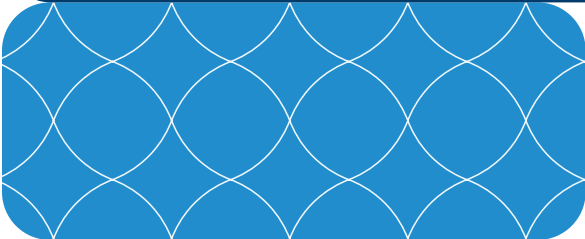
Whole Grains

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Content for this guide was adapted from information provided by Healthwise by WebMD Ignite.



Whole Grains

Eating the right kinds of grains can help support your health and weight goals.

Make whole grains part of your daily diet. They have lots of fiber and nutrients to keep you feeling full and energized.

Examples of Whole Grains

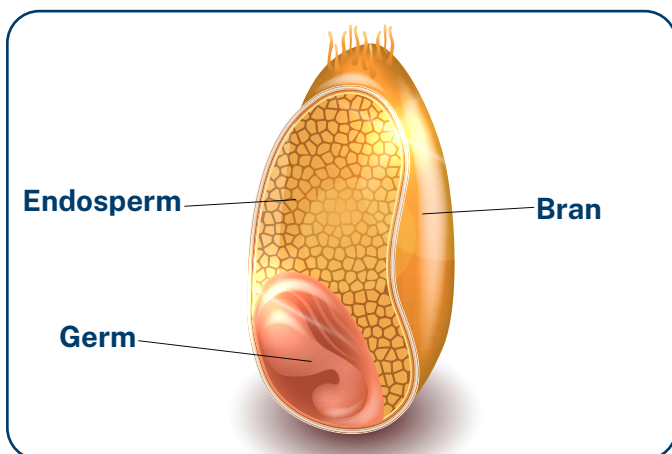
- Brown rice
- Buckwheat
- Bulgur (cracked wheat)
- Muesli
- Oatmeal
- Quinoa
- Shredded wheat cereal
- Whole cornmeal
- Whole grain barley
- Whole grain cornmeal
- Whole rye
- Whole wheat bread
- Whole wheat buns and rolls
- Whole wheat cereal
- Whole wheat crackers
- Whole wheat pasta
- Whole wheat tortillas
- Wild rice

A balanced diet with whole grains along with fruits, vegetables, protein, and dairy will support your overall health and help you stay on track with your goals.

Parts of a Whole Grain

A whole grain kernel has 3 important parts that help keep your body healthy:

- **Bran** – The outer layer.
 - It is full of fiber to help with digestion.
- **Germ** – The core.
 - It is packed with vitamins, minerals, and healthy fats.
- **Endosperm** – The middle part.
 - It is mostly carbohydrates for energy.



Refined and Enriched Grains are Not Whole

When grains are refined, the bran and germ are removed, leaving only the endosperm. This takes away important nutrients and fiber, making refined grains less healthy.

Some refined grains are “enriched,” meaning a few nutrients are added back. But they still are not as healthy as whole grains.

Choosing whole grains like brown rice, whole wheat bread, and oatmeal helps your body feel its best. So when you can, pick whole grains to give your body what it really needs.

Many refined and enriched grains have whole grain alternatives that are better choices. Here is a comparison:

Refined or Enriched Grain	Whole Grain
Instead of enriched cereal	Choose oatmeal
Instead of enriched flour	Choose whole wheat or oat flour
Instead of white bread	Choose whole wheat bread
Instead of white pasta	Choose whole wheat pasta
Instead of white rice	Choose brown rice

Whole Grains and Your Health

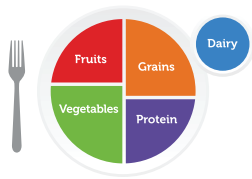
Whole grains are important for keeping your body strong and healthy. When we eat them in their natural form, they have more good stuff for our bodies.

Whole grains have vitamins, minerals, and fiber that help keep your heart, stomach, and body working well. They can help lower the risk of conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.

Make Half Your Grains Whole

Experts recommend that at least half the grains you eat should be whole grains. Making simple swaps in the grains you eat can help you meet this recommendation and improve your overall health.

Start simple
with MyPlate



Make Half Your Grains Whole Grains

Healthy eating is important at every age. Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what grains to eat, choose options that are full of nutrients and limited in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Start with these tips:



Have whole grains at breakfast

Enjoy a whole-grain hot cereal. Oatmeal is a favorite but consider trying a grain that's new to you, like buckwheat or millet. You might find a new breakfast favorite.



Enjoy a multigrain bowl

Create a one-dish meal by layering a mixture of grains like barley or wild rice with some colorful veggies and some low-fat cheese. Add your favorite protein and a dash of hot pepper sauce.



Swap your sandwich bread

Look for sandwich-type breads made with whole grains. Pita, tortillas, naan, sliced breads, and rolls are all available as whole grains.



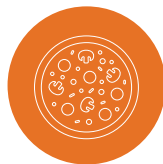
Choose whole-grain takeout

Ask about whole-grain options when dining out or ordering take-out food. For example, make a switch to whole-wheat pasta or brown or wild rice.



Experiment with a new grain

Cook a new grain like quinoa, amaranth, or millet. You can find cooking tips and recipes online. Grains are pretty versatile and also have lots of important nutrients.



Switch up pizza night

Create individual, homemade pizzas on whole-wheat English muffins or tortillas. Or, make a traditional pizza using a premade whole-wheat flour. Don't forget the veggie toppings.



Go to [MyPlate.gov](https://www.MyPlate.gov) for more information. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

**The benefits of healthy eating
add up over time, bite by bite.**

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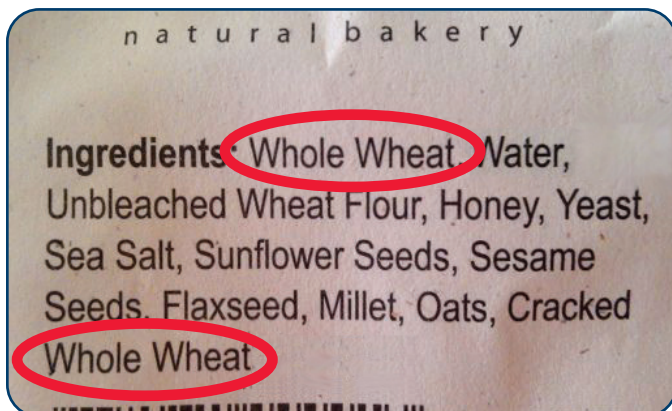


Simple Swaps to Eat More Whole Grains

- Choose whole grain breads and cereals instead of white bread or pastries.
 - Stay away from refined grains that have added sugars, extra salt, and unhealthy fats.
- Try brown rice or whole wheat pasta.
- Eat whole grain crackers.
- For baking, use whole wheat or oat flour for at least half the flour in a recipe.
- Serve and eat whole grains each day with meals or as snacks.
- Popcorn as a whole grain can be a healthy snack.
 - But do not add butter or salt.
 - Try air-popped popcorn or use herbs for flavor instead.

How to Find Whole Grains

Always check the ingredients list on the foods you choose. To make sure you are getting whole grains, check that the first ingredient listed has the word “**whole**” (examples: “**whole** wheat” or “**whole** oats”).



Be careful of words like “multigrain” or “wheat flour” on the ingredients list. They might not mean whole grain. Multigrain means it has different grains, but they might not be whole.

Wheat sounds healthy, but it could be refined wheat. This means it is missing important nutrients your body needs. Not all wheat is whole wheat.

Whole Grains vs. Whole Wheat

Whole grain and whole wheat sound the same, but they are a little different. Whole wheat is one type of whole grain. That means all whole wheat is whole grain, but not all whole grains are whole wheat (just like how all carrots are vegetables, but not all vegetables are carrots).

Whole Grains for Celiac Disease and Gluten Sensitivity

Celiac disease (or celiac sprue) is a problem with digesting gluten. Gluten is a type of protein found in wheat, rye, and other grains.

Celiac disease causes damage to the small intestine. This makes it hard for the body to absorb vitamins and other nutrients.

People with gluten sensitivity may not have the same damage to the intestine, but they can still have digestive issues and discomfort after eating gluten.

Following a gluten-free diet can be challenging, but you can still enjoy many nutritious whole grains that do not have gluten. The key is to read the ingredients list carefully and choose grains that are naturally gluten-free.

Grains with Gluten

Some grains have gluten and you need to stay away from them if celiac disease or gluten sensitivity. These include:

- Barley (often found in malt and some cereals)
- Rye
- Triticale (a wheat-rye hybrid)
- Wheat (including whole wheat, wheat flour, and wheat-based foods)

Gluten-Free Whole Grains

Instead of wheat, barley, or rye, choose for naturally gluten-free whole grains, such as:

- Amaranth
- Brown rice
- Buckwheat (despite its name, it's gluten-free)
- Corn (including whole cornmeal and popcorn)
- Millet
- Quinoa
- Sorghum
- Teff

Be Careful with Oats

Oats do not have gluten, but they can mix with gluten when they are made. Some people with celiac disease may also have trouble eating oats. To stay safe, pick gluten-free oats or ask your doctor before eating them.

Content for this guide was adapted from information provided by Healthwise by WebMD Ignite, U.S. Department of Agriculture MyPlate, and Oldways Whole Grains Council.



[WellSpan.org](https://www.wellspan.org)

