

Grains

1. What foods are in the grain group?

Any food product made from wheat, rice, oats, maize (corn), barley, rye, millet, farro, kamut, and any other cereal grain. Examples are: Bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, rice cakes, cornmeal and grits.

2. What is the difference between whole and refined grain products?

- **Whole grain products** contain all three parts of the seed ('kernel') of a plant: the bran, germ, and endosperm. *Examples are:* Whole-wheat flour, bulgur (cracked wheat), oatmeal, whole cornmeal, brown rice and whole grain cous cous.
- **Refined grain products** are processed by removing the *bran* and the *germ* including fiber, iron, minerals, and vitamins. *Examples are:* White or 'enriched' bread, white rice, white flour tortillas, most crackers, and grain-based desserts such as muffins, cookies and cakes.

3. What are the health benefits of eating whole grains?

Whole grains are important source of many nutrients that have health benefits such as:

- **Fiber:** Reduces constipation, lowers cholesterol and may lower the risk of heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes. Fiber also helps you feel full.
- **B vitamin:** Help your body use energy and keep your nerves healthy.
- **Folic acid (folate):** Helps form red blood cells that deliver oxygen to every cell in the body and helps prevent birth defects.

4. How many grain foods do I need daily?

The amount of grains you should eat every day depends on your age, gender, and physical activity level. At least half of the grains you eat should be whole grains. Visit www.choosemyplate.gov to help you choose the grain items and amounts that are right for you.

5. What are some tips to help me eat whole grains?

- Choose whole wheat bread instead of white bread, and brown rice instead of white rice. Try whole wheat pasta or whole wheat tortillas.
- Substitute whole grain flour such as whole wheat or oat for recipes that have white flour (for example, pancakes, waffles and muffins).
- Try brown rice as stuffing in baked green peppers or tomatoes.
- Add barley to vegetable soups and bulgur to salads.
- Snack on popcorn with a dash of garlic or curry powder.



**Be a label investigator:
Make sure it's really "whole"!**

- **Label lingo:** The *ingredients list* is your friend. Packages that say "100% wheat" or "multi-grain" may use refined grains, not whole grains. Make sure the word "whole" is used in front of the name of the grain and that it's near the top of the list.
- **Don't judge by its color:** Grain products can be brown because of molasses or other added ingredients. Read the *ingredients list* to make sure it's made of whole grain.
- **Go for variety.** Try these tasty whole grains: Brown rice, buckwheat, bulgur, millet, oats, barley, rye or wild rice.
- **Fabulous fiber:** Check the Nutrition Facts label and choose whole grain products with more than 3 grams of fiber per serving.

For more information:

Los Angeles County,
Department of Public Health
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/>
or call (213) 351-7889

United State Department of
Agriculture (USDA)
www.choosemyplate.gov