

# Grains in the Diet

## What are grains?

Grains come from the seeds of plants. Foods made from grains are an important part of a healthy diet. Grain products are naturally low in fat and come in many different varieties. Grains provide energy, help you have a healthy digestive system, and can help you lose weight.

Whole grains are a healthier choice than refined grains. Plant seeds have:

- A protective outer layer, which is high in fiber and rich in protein
- A part that sprouts when planted, which is high in vitamins, minerals, and essential fatty acids
- A starchy inner part, which has very few nutrients

Whole grains include all of these parts. When grains are refined or processed, the parts with the nutrients are removed, and only the starchy inner part is left. Although vitamins and minerals are added after processing, these grains have fewer nutrients than whole grains and do not contain much fiber. Most refined grains are enriched with certain vitamins and iron. Fiber is not added after processing. Examples of refined grains are enriched pasta, white rice, and white flour products.

To buy products made with whole grains, look at the ingredients listed on the label for the words “whole wheat” or “whole grain.” Just because the bread is brown does not mean it is whole grain, unless the ingredients say "whole wheat" or "whole grain." Whole grains are high in fiber. High-fiber diets can help prevent heart disease, diabetes, and cancer, as well as digestive diseases. Some products, such as breakfast cereals, are a mixture of whole and refined grains.

## How many grains do I need?

Most Americans eat plenty of grains, but not enough whole grains. At least one-half of the grains you eat should be whole grains.

The amount you need depends on your age, gender, and level of activity. The USDA says that adults should have an average of 6 one-ounce servings of grain each day. In general, 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of cereal, or a half cup of cooked rice or pasta counts as a 1 ounce serving.

Grain products are not high calorie except when a lot of fat and sugar have been added, so limit pastries, dessert breads, and muffins. Calories from whole grains are no more likely to cause weight gain than any other food. Weight gain is caused by eating too many calories, not by eating a certain kind of food. The high-fiber content of many whole grains may also help you to feel full with fewer calories.

## How can I include more whole grains in my diet?

There are many whole-grain products available, such as high-fiber cereals (shredded wheat, bran flakes, and oatmeal), breads, and multigrain muffins. When you cook, use whole grains instead of refined grains. Try brown rice or quinoa instead of white rice, use whole grain barley or wild rice in soups, or use rolled oats instead of refined bread crumbs.

Try to choose grain products that contain 3 or more grams of fiber per serving.


For more information, see

- ChooseMyPlate  
<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/grains.html>


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## Sources of Fiber in Foods

|  | Serving size | Grams of Fiber |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| <b>Breads, cereals, grains</b>  |              |                |
| 100% All Bran   | 1/2 cup      | 9              |
| Corn Flakes   | 1 cup        | 1              |
| Oatmeal, cooked   | 1 cup        | 4.0            |
| Rice, brown, long grain, cooked   | 1 cup        | 3              |
| Rice, white, cooked   | 1/3 cup      | 1              |
| Shredded Wheat  | 2 biscuits   | 6              |
| White bread   | 1 slice      | 0.8            |
| Whole grain bread   | 1 slice      | 2.0            |

|  | Serving size | Grams of Fiber |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| <b>Fruits</b>   |              |                |
| Apple, with skin  | 1 large      | 5              |
| Apricot   | 1            | 1              |
| Banana  | 1            | 3              |
| Blackberries  | 1 cup        | 8              |
| Blueberries   | 1 cup        | 4              |
| Cantaloupe  | 1 cup        | 1              |
| Dates   | 5            | 3              |
| Grapefruit, pink  | 1/2          | 2.0            |
| Nectarine   | 1            | 2              |
| Orange  | 1 small      | 3              |
| Peach   | 1            | 2              |
| Pear  | 1 medium     | 5.1            |
| Pineapple   | 1 cup        | 2.2            |
| Plum  | 1 small      | 1              |
| Prunes, dried   | 5            | 3.0            |
| Raisins   | 1/4 cup      | 1              |
| Strawberries  | 1 cup        | 3              |

|  | Serving size | Grams of Fiber |
|--|--------------|----------------|
| <b>Vegetables</b>  |              |                |
| Beans, baked, canned, plain  | 1 cup        | 10             |
| Beans, green, cooked   | 1 cup        | 4.0            |
| Beets, canned  | 1 cup        | 2              |
| Broccoli, raw  | 1 cup        | 2              |
| Cabbage, raw   | 1 cup        | 2              |
| Carrots, raw   | 1 cup        | 4              |
| Cauliflower, raw   | 1 cup        | 2              |
| Celery, raw  | 1 cup        | 2              |
| Corn, yellow, cooked   | 1 cup        | 4              |
| Lentils, cooked  | 1 cup        | 15             |
| Lettuce, romaine, raw  | 1 cup        | 1              |
| Lettuce, iceberg, raw  | 1 cup        | 1              |
| Peas, boiled   | 1 cup        | 9              |
| Peas, split  | 1 cup        | 16             |
| Potato, baked, fresh   | 1/2 potato   | 2              |
| Sweet potato, cooked without skin  | 1/2 potato   | 3              |
| Tomato, red, ripe  | 1 tomato     | 2              |
| Winter squash, cooked  | 1 cup        | 6              |

|  | Serving size | Grams of Fiber |
|--|--------------|----------------|
| <b>Nuts</b>  |              |                |
| Almonds (22 nuts)  | 1 oz.        | 3              |
| Peanuts, dry roasted (32 nuts)   | 1 oz.        | 2              |
| Walnuts, English (14 halves)   | 1 oz.        | 2              |

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