

Whole Grain Basics

Whole grains vs. Refined grains

All grains start as whole grains. *Whole grains* are the unaltered seed of a plant, that contains the bran, the germ, the endosperm and naturally occurring nutrients in their original proportions.

A *refined grain* is a grain that's had a key part removed, typically the bran or the germ. White flour and white rice are both examples of refined grains, as they have had both the bran and germ removed. Refining grains removes a quarter of the protein and about two thirds of the original nutrients in the grain.

What is an "Enriched grain"?

Enrichment is the process of taking a refined grain, and re-adding nutrients that have been removed. However, only select nutrients are added back in and they are proportioned entirely different from the original grain.

Check the Ingredients

If the first ingredient contains the word "whole", it is likely a whole grain. If there are two grains listed, and only the second contains the word "whole", it may contain as little as 1% or up to 49% whole grain. Food labels and ingredients can be sneaky, make sure you know how to read and understand them!

Dietary Guidelines

The most recent guideline recommends that all adults make at least half their daily grains whole grains. This equals between 3 to 5 servings, or 3 to 5 ounces of whole grains a day.

Easy ways to Eat Whole Grains

- Try mixing half whole wheat pasta with half regular pasta.
- Substitute half the white flour with whole wheat flour when baking breads, muffins, or cookies.
- Add a cup of brown rice, wild rice or barley to your favorite canned or homemade soup.
- Add a handful of oats to plain yogurt or into your smoothie before you blend it.
- Switch to a whole grain bread that lists the first ingredient as a whole grain and contains 3g or more of fiber.

Preparing Whole Grains

- For quinoa, prepare a 2:1 ratio. Boil 2 cups of water, reduce heat and add 1 cup quinoa. Let simmer for 15 minutes, or until water is absorbed. Remove from heat, let sit for 5 minutes, fluff with a fork and enjoy! Try preparing quinoa in a low sodium broth for added flavor.
- For barley or wild rice, prepare at a 3:1 ratio. Boil 3 cups of water, reduce heat and add 1 cup of grain. Let simmer for 45-60 minutes, or until water is absorbed and grain is tender. Try preparing the barley or wild rice in a low sodium broth for added flavor.
- For steel cut oats, prepare a 4:1 ratio. Boil 4 cups of water, reduce heat and add 1 cup of steel cut oats. Let simmer for 30 minutes, or until oats are tender. Mix in fresh fruit or sliced almonds for a great start to your day!

Source: <https://wholegrainscouncil.org/>

Contact your onsite Health Coach for more information on whole grains:

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