Health Yourself Byte

**THE WHOLE SCOOP ON WHOLE GRAIN**

Recent studies show that few adults and even fewer children are eating the recommended daily servings of whole grains which are a great source of dietary fiber and other beneficial nutrients. Medical evidence shows that whole grains reduce the risks for heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes and obesity. Because of the phytochemicals and antioxidants, people who eat three (3) servings of whole grains daily have been shown to reduce their risk of heart disease by 25-36%, stroke by 37%, Type II diabetes by 21-27%, digestive system cancers by 21-43% and hormone-related cancers by 10-40%.

But what exactly is a "whole grain"? Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or another cereal grain is a grain product. Bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits are examples of grain products.  But grains are divided into 2 subgroups, **whole grains** and **refined grains**.

Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel — the bran, germ, and endosperm. Examples include (but are not limited to):

- whole-wheat flour
- bulgur (cracked wheat)
- oatmeal
- whole cornmeal
- brown rice

Refined grains have been milled, a process that removes the bran and germ. This is done to give grains a finer texture and improve their shelf life, but it also removes dietary fiber, iron, and many B vitamins. Some examples of refined grain products are:

- white flour
- degermed cornmeal
- white bread
- white rice

Most refined grains are *enriched*. This means certain B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, folic acid) and iron are added back after processing. **Fiber is not added back to enriched grains**.   Look for the whole grain symbol on products in your supermarket!
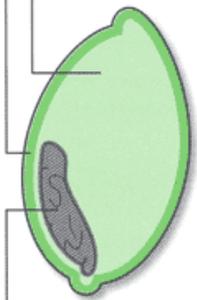


**Whole grain kernel**

**Bran**
"Outer shell" protects seed
*Fiber, B vitamins, trace minerals*

**Endosperm**
Provides energy
*Carbohydrates, protein*

**Germ**
Nourishment for the seed
*Antioxidants, vitamin E, B vitamins*


LOOK FOR WHOLE GRAIN — WholeGrainsCouncil.org

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The Medical Center *of* Plano