



## What Foods Are in the Grains Group?

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.

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:**

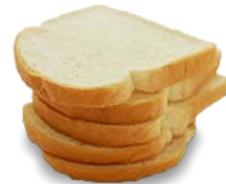
- whole-wheat flour
- bulgur (cracked wheat)
- oatmeal
- whole cornmeal
- brown rice



**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
- de-germed 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. Check the ingredient list on refined grain products to make sure that the word "enriched" is included in the grain name. Some food products are made from mixtures of whole grains and refined grains.

**Key Consumer Message** *Make at least half of your grains whole grains.*



## Commonly eaten grain products

### Whole Grains

- o amaranth
- o brown rice
- o buckwheat
- o bulgur (cracked wheat)
- o millet
- o oatmeal
- o popcorn
- o rolled oats
- o quinoa
- o sorghum
- o triticale
- o whole grain barley
- o whole grain cornmeal
- o whole rye
- o whole wheat bread
- o whole wheat crackers
- o whole wheat pasta

- o whole wheat sandwich buns and rolls
- o whole wheat tortillas
- o wild rice

### Ready-to-eat

#### breakfast cereals

- o whole wheat cereal flakes
- o Muesli

### Refined Grains

- o cornbread\*
- o corn tortillas\*
- o couscous\*
- o crackers\*
- o flour tortillas\*
- o grits
- o noodles\*
- o pitas\*
- o pretzels
- o white bread
- o white sandwich buns and rolls
- o white rice

### Pastas

- o spaghetti
- o macaroni

### Ready-to-eat

#### breakfast cereals

- o corn flakes

\* Most of these products are made from refined grains. Some are made from whole grains. Check the ingredient list for the words "whole grain" or "whole wheat" to decide if they are made from a whole grain. Some foods are made from a mixture of whole and refined grains.

Some grain products contain significant amounts of bran. Bran provides fiber, which is important for health. However, products with added bran or bran alone (e.g., oat bran) are not necessarily whole grain products.

# Ways to Boost Fiber

By Holly Larson, MS, RD

Fiber is an essential nutrient. However, most Americans are falling far short of the recommended daily amount in their diets. Women should aim for 25 grams of fiber per day, while men should target 38 grams (or 21 and 30 grams daily, respectively, for those over the age of 51).

Dietary fiber contributes to our health and wellness in a number of ways. First, it aids in providing fullness after meals, which helps promote a healthy weight. Second, adequate fiber can help to lower cholesterol. Third, it helps prevent constipation and diverticulosis; and, fourth, adequate fiber from food helps keep blood sugar within a healthy range.



## Natural Sources of Fiber

Eating the skin or peel of fruits and vegetables provides a greater dose of fiber, which is found naturally in these sources. Fiber is also found in beans and lentils, whole grains, nuts and seeds. Typically, the more refined or processed a food becomes, the lower its fiber content. For example, one medium apple with the peel contains 4.4 grams of fiber, while ½ cup of applesauce contains 1.4 grams, and 4 ounces of apple juice contains none at all.

With a few simple and tasty substitutions, you can increase your fiber from foods in no time. For breakfast, choose steel cut oats with nuts and berries instead of a plain low-fiber, refined cereal. At lunch, have a sandwich or wrap on a whole-grain tortilla or whole-grain bread and add veggies, such as lettuce and tomato, or serve with veggie soup. For a snack, have fresh veggies or whole-grain crackers with hummus. With dinner, try brown rice or whole-grain noodles instead of white rice or pasta made with white flour.

Here are a few whole foods that are naturally high in fiber:

- 1 large pear with skin (7 grams)
- 1 cup fresh raspberries (8 grams)
- ½ medium avocado (5 grams)
- 1 ounce almonds (3.5 grams)
- ½ cup cooked black beans (7.5 grams)
- 3 cups air-popped popcorn (3.6 grams)
- 1 cup cooked pearled barley (6 grams)

When increasing fiber, be sure to do it gradually and with plenty of fluids. Fiber in your diet is similar to a new sponge; it needs water to plump up. If you consume more than your usual intake of fiber but not enough fluid, you may experience nausea or constipation.

Before you reach for the fiber supplements, consider this: fiber is found naturally in nutritious, whole foods. Studies have found the same benefits, such as a feeling of fullness may not result from fiber supplements or from fiber-enriched foods. If you're missing out on your daily amount of fiber, you may be trailing in other essential nutrients as well. Your fiber intake is a good gauge for overall diet quality. Try to reach your fiber goal with whole foods so you get all the other benefits they provide.

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## Great Grains Key

1. Whole Grains
2. Graham
3. Oatmeal
4. Wild Rice
5. Cereal
6. Buckwheat
7. Fiber
8. Enriched
9. Popcorn
10. Barley

Secret Message: **Make half your grains whole!**

