

Whole Grains \neq FIBER!

In the past, whole grains were thought to provide nothing more than fiber. Fiber does help to promote healthy laxation and gut health, and helps reduce the risk of heart disease and diabetes. That is not the whole story!

Fiber is found primarily in the bran portion of the kernel. The whole grain includes not only the bran, but the germ and endosperm as well. New research reveals that whole grains offer

vitamins and minerals, plus high levels of antioxidants and other healthy plant-based nutrients. Whole grains contain protective antioxidants in amounts near or exceeding those in fruits and vegetables. They also provide some unique antioxidants not found in other foods.

Research continues to turn up new evidence on the benefits of whole grains. We have known for years that the fiber in whole grain helps promote digestive health. More recently, studies

have shown that eating more whole grains may help reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer and diabetes. New studies published in 2005 and 2006 show that whole grains may lower triglycerides, improve insulin control, help in weight management, and slow the build-up of arterial plaque.

What is a Whole Grain?

All grains start out as whole grains. If, after milling, they keep all three parts of the original grain – the germ, bran and endosperm – in their original proportions, they still qualify as whole grains.

Make Half – or More – of Your Grains Whole

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines recommend that Americans “make half their grains whole.” This means most people should consume three or more servings of whole grains each day. This is a minimum – the Dietary Guidelines say that “more whole grains up to all the grains recommended may be selected.”

What is a Serving of Whole Grain?

The Dietary Guidelines define a serving (or ounce-equivalent) of grain as 1 slice of 100% whole grain bread, a cup of 100% whole grain cereal, or 1/2 cup of 100% whole grain hot cereal, cooked pasta, rice or other grain. As Americans begin to appreciate the nuttier, fuller taste of whole grains, many start with products made with a mix of whole and enriched grains. In these foods, servings are counted differently: 16 grams or more of whole grain ingredients counts as a full serving. This means most Americans need 48 grams or more of whole grains daily. A growing number of foods are being labeled with information about whole grain content, making it easier for consumers to identify whole grain products. Foods made only with bran are not whole grain products. High fiber is not always equivalent to whole grain. It is important to check the ingredient list for whole grains among the first ingredients.

