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Whole Grain Explained

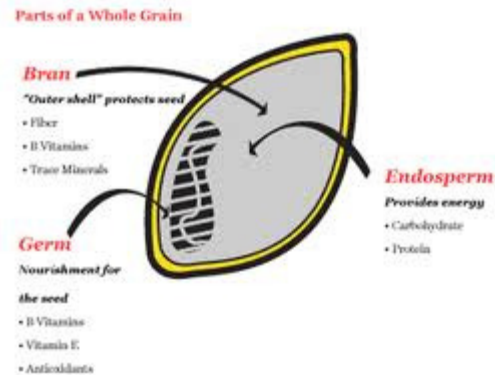
Hi Valued Customer,

Often I have clients ask me about whole grains and what are they exactly. First lets start with a basic and simple definition. There are three parts to a "grain", the cereal germ, endosperm and bran. A whole grain is when all three parts of the grain are used to make foodstuff. All three parts contain protein, carbohydrates, fiber and iron. The Bran and germ are rich in B vitamins and the germ with essential fatty acids.

According to the AACC International (American Association of Cereal Chemists)

"Whole grains shall consist of the intact, ground, cracked or flaked caryopsis, whose principal anatomical components - the starchy endosperm, germ and bran - are present in the same relative proportions as they exist in the intact caryopsis."

Some whole grain examples include; wheat, oats, brown rice, maize, rye, quinoa, amaranth and buckwheat, just to name a few.



Now lets debunk a few myths:

Not all dark colored bread is whole grain.

Some manufacturers use molasses and caramel coloring to simulate whole grain color. Only if it says "whole grain", or something to that affect, is it really whole grain.

All whole-grain foods made with whole-grain ingredients are good sources of fiber.

Not true. Different types of whole grains contain different proportions of bran, endosperm and germ. That means they supply different amounts of fiber and other nutrients.

Picking a cereal made with whole grains is a good way to get fiber.

According to Kellogg's, almost half the cereals with whole-grain claims on the package did not contain enough fiber to qualify as a good source. When picking a whole-grain cereal, "flip for fiber." Simply flip the package to read the Nutrition Facts panel and check how much fiber a serving provides. At least 3 grams, or 10% Daily Value, is a "good source" and at least 5 grams, or 20% Daily Value, is an "excellent source."

(I do like Kellogg's simple advice of 'Flip for Fiber'.)

These are but a few of the many myths. But lets move on the some benefits of whole grain.

In January 2006, The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, (Vol. 83, No. 1, 124-131) reported that whole grain intake is inversely associated with metabolic syndrome and mortality in older adults. The results of this study showed a significant "inverse trend" between whole-grain intake and the metabolic syndrome and mortality from cardiovascular disease, independent of demographic, lifestyle, and dietary factors. Fasting glucose concentrations and body mass index decreased, independent of confounders, whereas intake of refined grain was positively associated with higher fasting glucose concentrations and a higher prevalence of the metabolic syndrome.

According to the Whole Grain Council, benefits of whole grains documented by repeated studies include: Stroke risk reduced 30-36%, type 2 diabetes risk reduced 21-30%, heart disease risk reduced 25-28%.

Some less researched, but believed benefits include: reduced risk of asthma, healthier carotid arteries, reduction of inflammatory disease risk, lower risk of colorectal cancer, healthier blood pressure levels.

I believe the science is in on this and "whole grain" foods should be a **part of a healthy diet**. On the same note, just because you eat some whole grain, doesn't necessarily mean your eating healthy. It is a part of a balanced approach, that we at [Lifestyle Fitness and Nutrition](#) take. The Dietary Guidelines recommend that all adults eat at least half their grains as whole grains, which should be 3 to 5 servings.

Buyer beware and make sure to read the labels and check to make sure the ingredients list say "whole grain".

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Lifestyle Fitness and Nutrition
9219 Cincinnati Columbus Road
West Chester, Ohio 45069
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