

EAT WHOLE GRAINS & NUTS



YOUR CHALLENGE: Make half your grains whole grains and include one ounce of nuts, seeds, or nut butter per day. Report the completion of your goal at www.dmba.com with a simple “yes” or “no.”

WHY EAT WHOLE GRAINS?

Whole grains are good sources of fiber and key nutrients needed by the body for good health. Numerous studies show that people who primarily eat whole grains have less obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and colon cancer, and they live longer, healthier lives.

On the other hand, a high intake of refined grains or white flour products increases the risk for many of these same health problems.

WHAT'S A WHOLE GRAIN?

Examples of whole grains include wheat, oats, corn, barley, buckwheat, and brown rice in their natural state. A whole grain has three components: bran, germ, and endosperm.

Refining or processing grains strips away the bran and germ that contain most nutrients, dietary fiber, essential fatty acids, and antioxidants, all of which protect your health.

Bleaching (to make flour white) further reduces the nutritional content. Sometimes manufacturers replace some of the lost vitamins and minerals, which is why you may see products labeled “enriched.” However, most vitamins and minerals and other protective factors, such as dietary fiber, are still lacking.

CHOOSE A VARIETY OF WHOLE GRAINS DAILY

- Choose 100 percent whole-wheat bread (read the label) and multi-grain breads.
- Choose whole-grain breakfast cereals, cooked or ready to eat: Shredded Wheat, oatmeal, brown rice, whole grain rye, and barley, to name a few.
- You can buy whole-grain pasta in many stores. Try it. You may like it.
- Read labels carefully. Bread that says “wheat flour” or “enriched flour” means white, refined flour. It must say “100 percent whole grain” to be whole grain. Don’t be fooled.

WHAT ABOUT NUTS AND SEEDS? WHY ARE THEY SO IMPORTANT?

Nuts and seeds are high in fat, so many people in the past have suggested they shouldn’t be eaten. We now know that the fats in nuts and seeds are healthy fats.

They are rich in essential fatty acids and the kind of fat that lowers the risk of heart disease—mono and polyunsaturated fats. Eating healthy fat is associated with a long, healthy life. Numerous studies have proven nuts help to reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.

NUTS CAN BE DANGEROUS FOR SOME, SO BE CAREFUL

- Any number of foods can cause a food allergy. But peanuts are one of the main foods to cause severe anaphylaxis (a sudden drop in blood pressure that can be fatal if not treated quickly). Tree nuts (walnuts and pecans, for example) can also cause an allergic reaction.
- A food allergy happens when a person’s body perceives a food as an enemy and wages war to rid it from the system. Food allergies cannot be cured. The only treatment is to avoid the offending food.
- A medical evaluation is the key to proper management of food allergies. Even if you’re allergic to walnuts, you might be able to enjoy hazelnuts or almonds. Or if you’re allergic to all nuts, you might find sunflower or pumpkin seeds a good option.



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WAYS TO INCREASE YOUR INTAKE OF NUTS AND SEEDS

Optimal health comes from eating a variety of nuts and/or seeds daily: walnuts, hazelnuts, Brazil nuts, almonds, cashews, peanuts, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, flax seed, chia, hemp, and unhydrogenated butters, such as peanut butter, almond butter, and tahini.

- Enjoy a variety of nuts and seeds. Eat them raw or roasted. Have them available at most meals and snacks.
- Add nuts and seeds to your cooking. Put slivered almonds or pumpkin seeds on vegetables and in salads. Add nuts to cookies and breads. Sprinkle nuts on applesauce and other fruits.
- Use nut spreads (peanut butter or almond butter) in place of butter or margarine.
- Put them in lunches and snacks. Sunflower seeds taste great on salads. Add flax to oatmeal, breads, and other cereals.

As you can see, whole grains, as well as nuts and seeds, are important to your well-balanced diet. Review the serving guidelines that follow. Getting in enough of the good stuff may be easier than you think.

SO WHAT'S CONSIDERED A SERVING?

Whole-grain breads and cereals:

- One slice of whole-grain bread (100 percent whole-wheat bread)
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of whole-grain ready-to-eat cereal (Shredded Wheat)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked whole-grain cereal (oatmeal, brown rice, or pasta)

One ounce of nuts or seeds:

- Almonds, 24 nuts
- Almond butter, two tablespoons
- Brazil nuts, six to eight nuts

- Cashews, 18 nuts
- Flax meal, one rounded tablespoon
- Macadamia nuts, 10 to 12 nuts
- Peanuts, about 28 nuts
- Peanut butter, two tablespoons
- Pecans, 20 halves
- Pistachio nuts, about 47 nuts
- Sunflower seeds, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup
- Tahini (sesame butter), two tablespoons
- Walnuts, 14 halves

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

- American Heart Association <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living>
- WebMD <https://www.webmd.com/living-healthy>
- CDC Healthy Living <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyliving/index.html>

Note: If you can't complete this challenge because of a medical condition, let us know and we'll come up with an alternative for you.

