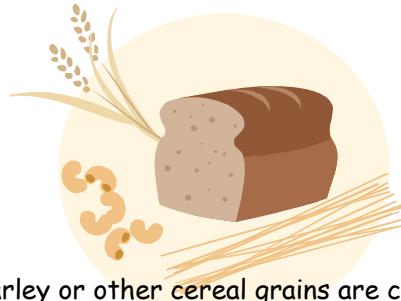


# Whole Grains



## What foods are in the grain group?

All foods made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley or other cereal grains are considered a grain product. Examples of these include: bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, and tortillas.

## Grains are split up into 2 groups, whole grains and refined grains.

**Whole grains** will have the entire grain kernel which includes the bran, germ, and endosperm. (Ex.: Whole-wheat flour, Bulgur (cracked wheat), Oatmeal, Whole cornmeal, Brown rice)

**Refined grains** have gone through a milling process that takes out the bran and germ. They do this to give the grain a finer texture and to give it a longer shelf life. This process does remove dietary fiber, iron, and many B vitamins. (Ex.: White flour, Degermed cornmeal, White bread, White rice)

We can buy most refined grains that have been enriched. This means some B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, folic acid) and iron have been put back in after it has been processed. During this process, fiber is not added back in to the product. Check the ingredient list of grain products to see if it has been "Enriched" or perhaps a combination of whole grains and refined grains.

## What counts as an ounce equivalent of grains?

In general, 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal can be considered as 1 ounce equivalent from the grains group.

## Why is it important to eat grains, especially whole grains?

Eating grains, especially whole grains, provides health benefits. People who eat whole grains as part of a healthy diet have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. Grains provide many nutrients that are vital for the health and maintenance of our bodies.

- Consuming foods rich in fiber, such as whole grains, as part of a healthy diet, reduces the risk of coronary heart disease, may reduce constipation, may help with weight management, and grains fortified with folate before and during pregnancy helps prevent neural tube defects during fetal development.
- Grains are important sources of many nutrients, including **dietary fiber**, several B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and folate), and minerals (**iron, magnesium, and selenium**).

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