

10 tips

MyPyramid
Nutrition Education Series

make half your grains whole



10 tips to help you eat whole grains

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. Grains are divided into two subgroups, **whole grains** and **refined grains**. Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel—the bran, germ, and endosperm. 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.

1 make simple switches

To eat more whole grains, substitute a whole-grain product for a refined product—such as eating whole-wheat bread instead of white bread or brown rice instead of white rice. It's important to *substitute* the whole-grain product for the refined one, rather than *adding* the whole-grain product.



2 whole grains can be healthy snacks

Popcorn, a whole grain, can be a healthy snack with little or no added salt and butter.



3 save some time

Freeze leftover cooked brown rice, bulgur, or barley. Heat and serve it later as a quick side dish.

4 mix it up with whole grains

Use whole grains in mixed dishes, such as barley in vegetable soup or stews and bulgur wheat in casseroles or stir-fries. Then, you don't need that added dinner roll!

5 try whole-wheat versions

For a change, try brown rice or whole-wheat pasta. Try brown rice stuffing in baked green peppers or tomatoes, and whole-wheat macaroni in macaroni and cheese.

6 bake up some whole-grain goodness

Experiment by substituting whole-wheat or oat flour for up to half of the flour in pancake, waffle, muffin, or other flour-based recipes. They may need a bit more leavening.

7 be a good role model for children

Set a good example for children by eating whole grains with meals or as snacks.

8 read food ingredients

Teach older children to read the ingredient list on cereals or snack food packages and choose those with whole grains at the top of the list.



9 know what to look for on the label

Choose foods that name one of the following whole-grain ingredients **first** on the label's ingredient list: "brown rice," "bulgur," "graham flour," "oatmeal," "whole-grain corn," "whole oats," "whole rye," "whole wheat," or "wild rice."

10 be a savvy shopper

A food's color is not an indication of a whole grain. Bread can be brown because of molasses or other added ingredients. Read the ingredient list to see if it is a whole grain.

