About Whole Grains

Grains are divided into two subgroups: whole grains and refined grains.

**Refined grains** have been milled, a process that removes the bran and the germ. This is done to give the grains a finer texture and improve shelf life. Unfortunately, in this process, dietary fiber, iron, and many vitamins and minerals are removed. Although vitamins and minerals are sometimes added back into the refined grains, they still don’t provide as many nutrients or fiber as whole grains do.

**Whole grains** contain the entire grain kernel (bran, germ, and endosperm). This makes whole grain products high in protein, fiber, and many vitamins and minerals. Medical evidence shows that whole grains can reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and obesity.
Ways to Add More Whole Grains to Your Diet

- Eat breakfasts consisting of high fiber cereals, such as Bran Flakes, Shredded Wheat, or Oatmeal
- Substitute whole wheat bread or bagels for plain white bread
- Buy whole grain pastas
- Substitute whole wheat flour for half the white flour in recipes for muffins, cookies, quick breads, and pancakes
- Pop popcorn
- Add whole grains such as cooked brown rice, rolled oats, or whole grain breadcrumbs, to ground meat or poultry for extra body
- Add brown or wild rice and barley to soups, casseroles, and salads

Check the List of Ingredients

If the first ingredient listed contains the word ‘whole’ (such as ‘whole wheat flour’ or ‘whole oats’) it is most likely that the product is predominantly whole grain.