

Choose Whole Grains

Whole-grain foods have all three parts of the grain: the bran, the endosperm and the germ. Each part provides different nutrients, so we get the most nutrition when we eat all three.

How can you tell if a food is whole grain?

Check the ingredient list. Be sure the word “whole” is in front of the grain. For example, whole-wheat flour is a whole grain, but wheat flour is not. Other whole grains to look for include:

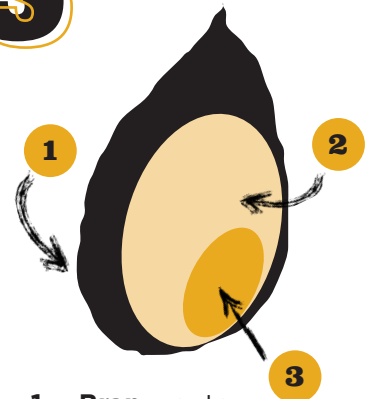
- Brown rice
- Quinoa
- Oats
- Barley
- Bulgur
- Millet
- Whole cornmeal
- Popcorn
- Wild rice

Some words on the package may be misleading.

Food manufacturers often use clever marketing to make you think their product is healthier than it actually is. Images of wheat or a textured appearance may be used along with the following words:

- Multigrain
- 100% wheat
- Stone ground
- “Made with whole grains”
- Pumpernickel
- Cracked wheat
- Brown bread
- Organic wheat

None of these words mean whole grain.



- 1. Bran** – outer layer; contains antioxidants, B vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- 2. Endosperm** – mostly carbohydrates. This is what’s leftover when a grain is refined, such as white flour.
- 3. Germ** – contains B vitamins, vitamin E, mineral and healthy fats.

How much do you need?

Anyone over the age of 9 should aim for 5 to 9 ounce-equivalents of grains each day. This number may increase for those who are very active. Children ages 2-8 need 3 to 5 ounce-equivalents. At least half of your daily grains should be whole grains, regardless of age.

What counts as a one-ounce equivalent?

In general, 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal can be considered as 1 ounce-equivalent from the Grains group.

Grain food	Amount that = 1 ounce-equivalent of grains	Common portions and ounce-equivalents (oz-equiv)
Bagels	1" mini bagel	1 large bagel = 4 oz-equiv
Bread	1 regular slice	2 regular slices = 2 oz-equiv
Crackers	5-7 (depending on size)	
English muffins	½ muffin	1 muffin = 2 oz-equiv
Muffins	1 small (2 ½" diameter)	1 large (3 ½" diameter) = 3 oz-equiv
Oatmeal	½ cup, cooked 1 packet instant	
Popcorn	3 cups popped	
Pasta or noodles	½ cup cooked	1 cup cooked = 2 oz-equiv
Rice	½ cup cooked	1 cup cooked = 2 oz-equiv
Tortillas	1 small (6" diameter) tortilla	1 large (12" diameter) tortilla = 4 oz-equiv
Ready-to-eat breakfast cereal	1 cup	1 ½ to 2 cups = 1.5 to 2 oz-equiv

How can you add more whole grains to your daily meals?

- Try ready-to-eat or ready-to-cook whole grain cereal for breakfast.
- Choose whole-grain breads, tortillas, bagels, pita pockets or rolls.
- Eat popcorn for a snack.
- Add whole grains to mixed dishes. Try adding wild rice to soups or casseroles.
- Add oats to cookies or other desserts.
- Use oats in place of bread crumbs in meatloaf.
- Substitute one-quarter to one-half of the white flour with whole-grain flour in recipes.

Funded in part by the USDA SNAP. For more information, call MU Extension's Show Me Nutrition line at 1-888-515-0016. Need help stretching your food dollars? Contact your local resource center or go online to mydss.mo.gov/food-assistance



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