



Whole Grains vs. White

Wheat, in its natural unrefined state, features a host of important nutrients. In order to receive the benefit of these nutrients, it is important to choose wheat products made from "Whole Wheat" flour rather than those that are refined and stripped of their natural goodness.

Things that are made from white flour are damaging to your body. In essence it is like eating table sugar because of the way your body processes it. Your body digests the starch (white flour) much faster than whole wheat, which causes insulin levels to spike. When insulin levels are disturbed, it throws-off your whole body and everything has to compensate. The result is rapid increase, then a rapid decrease in blood sugar levels. The long-term effect is weight gain, diabetes and even changes in your appearance. On the other hand, whole wheat flour uses the entire wheat berry, which allows your body to digest it more slowly. Slower digestion allows your insulin levels to stay normal as well as keeps your body functions in balance. Another benefit of eating whole wheat is that it helps you stay fuller longer.

The Milling Process

Grains are the seeds of certain plants. The seed, or kernel, is made up of three parts: the bran, the endosperm and the germ. Parts of the grain are usually separated and then re-combined during the milling process in order to make specific types of flour such as whole wheat, whole grain, pastry and all purpose flour.

When grains are refined, the nutrient-dense and fiber-rich layers of bran and germ are milled away in order to expose the soft, easily digestible interior called the endosperm.

The endosperm contains most of the carbohydrate and protein while the bran contains much of the vitamins, minerals and fiber. The germ is rich in B-vitamins, heart-healthy oils, minerals and some protein. Most flours and products made with flour on the market today are made with the starch or the white part of the grain which has a long shelf life but is not as healthy for our body as the whole grain.



Selecting Whole Grain Products

Review the "Ingredient list" when selecting foods. Look for the word "whole grain", as the first ingredient. Remember that "Stone-Ground", "100% Wheat", "Cracked Wheat" or "Multigrain" does not necessarily mean the product is made from a whole grain. "Whole Grain needs to be listed in the number 1 or number 2 position of the ingredients list in order for the product to be a healthier choice.

Flour products, listing whole wheat flour followed by "enriched white flour", niacin and iron are not necessarily healthy products. If this is the case it usually means that a small percentage less than half of the flour could be white. Consumers sometimes believe they are getting a whole grain product because of the color however if you look further down the ingredient list you may see such items like molasses which is used to tint the product brown. Remember that the bran is what helps give the product its natural color and if something has been added to color the product then not all parts of the healthy grain may have been used.

June 2011

Fun Food Facts!



Popcorn is a healthy whole grain snack that has been around for over 6000 years. Today, it is the number one use for microwave ovens; so much so that most microwaves have a "popcorn" control button.

Did You Know?



Research shows that children gain weight twice as fast during the summer as during the school year. The researchers note that it is the lack of structure in the summer that's part of the problem. Try scheduling regular meals and snacks and include a nutritious breakfast. Make sure kids "get up and play" at least 60 minutes a day and include a variety of moderate and vigorous intensity activities, like biking, running, jumping and climbing.