

## 5 smart reasons to Get into a Whole Grain Habit

You'll find lots of tasty nutrition in every kernel of a whole grain. With whole grains, you get layers of rich nutrients. Whole grains include the bran (outside layer), endosperm (inside layer) and germ (center). You can find whole grain wheat, rye, oats and others! Here are five important reasons to make at least half your grains whole.

### 1. Fiber

Fiber is one of the most important nutrients found in whole grains. Many people know that fiber keeps your intestines running smoothly. But fiber's benefits go beyond bowel function. Fiber can help reduce blood cholesterol. It can help control blood sugar levels. And eating fiber aids in weight management! High fiber meals and snacks keep you full, so you eat less.



### 2. Stanols, sterols and other phytonutrients

Plain fiber or fiber supplements don't compare with whole grains. Whole grains offer a lot more nutrition. Whole grains have hundreds of healthy plant compounds called phytonutrients. Stanols and sterols are examples. They keep your gut from absorbing cholesterol. This may bring your cholesterol levels down.

### 3. Antioxidants

Think of antioxidants as rust proofing for your cells. Oxygen causes your car to rust. It also causes unwanted changes to your cells. Antioxidants protect your cells. Vitamin C and vitamin E are two antioxidants you may know about. These are found in whole grains along with others, like selenium.

### 4. Carbohydrates

"Carbs" are the body's main source of fuel. We need carbohydrates to move, breathe, think and learn. We also need carbohydrates to keep organs like our heart, lungs and brain working. Whole-grain breads, cereals, crackers and tortillas are great sources of "good carbs."

### 5. B-vitamins and trace minerals

B-vitamins help your body use carbohydrates. You can think of them as the spark plugs that help your car use gas efficiently. We only need very small amounts of "trace minerals." Whole grains have three important trace minerals – copper, iron, and zinc. These keep your heart and blood vessels healthy. They also help wounds to heal.