

It's Always a Great Time for Grains!



Grain Products are enjoyed every day by people around the world. Rice, pasta, tortillas, roti, bannock, couscous, and every size and shape of bread are just a few examples of foods made with the goodness of grains.

Grain Products are 1 of 4 important food groups in *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*.

They are our main source of carbohydrate which supplies our body with easy to use fuel. Grain products also provide key vitamins and minerals such as thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, iron, zinc and magnesium. Grain Products are an important source of fibre, which may help reduce our risk for heart disease, diabetes and obesity, and of course, prevent constipation.

Get the most nutritional value – go for the whole grain.

Make at least half of your grain products choices whole grain each day. Whole grains include all parts of the grain kernel –

the bran, germ and endosperm. The more a whole grain is refined during processing, the more nutrients are lost. Enriched products like pasta, white flour and some breakfast cereals have vitamins and minerals added back, however the original fibre and some micronutrients and minerals of the whole grain are still missing. Choose foods with “whole” in front of the grain in the ingredient list. For example, whole grain wheat or whole rye flour instead of wheat or rye flour.

How many servings a day?

The number of servings you eat depends on your age and gender. A Food Guide Serving equals one slice of bread (35 g), 1/2 a bun or bagel, or 125 mL (1/2 cup) of cooked rice, pasta, or 150 g (3/4 cup) hot cereal. Check the labels of cold cereals for the portion size. A Food Guide Serving of cold cereal is 30 grams.

Age # of Food Guide	Servings of Grain Products
Toddlers 2-3 years	3
Children 4-8 years	4
Youth 9-13 years	6
Teens (females) 14-18 years	6
Teens (males) 14-18 years	7
Adults (females) 19-50 years	6-7
Adults (males) 19-50 years	8
Adults (females) 51 years and older	6
Adults (males) 51 years and older	7

Trusted advice from dietitians. www.dietitians.ca

Tips for choosing and enjoying Grain Products

Mix it up.

Enjoy a variety of flavours and textures by mixing together two to three different breakfast cereals. Boost the fibre value of refined cereals by adding a handful of a high fibre cereal (one with at least 4 grams of fibre per serving).

Grains make great snacks!

Enjoy the crunch of low fat, whole grain crackers, Melba toast, dry cereal or plain popcorn as a healthier alternative to potato chips.

Flip fibre into your flapjacks

When making pancakes, muffins or cookies from “scratch” or a mix, add flaxseeds, rolled oats, wheat germ, oat or wheat bran, chopped nuts, dried fruit, or frozen blueberries for more fibre. Try substituting whole wheat or barley flour for all-purpose flour when baking.

Tired of sandwiches?

For a change, take your favourite fillings and wrap them in a tortilla, stuff them in a pita, pile them on a crusty roll or spread them on a bagel. Try the whole grain varieties for added fibre.

Lower is better.

The Glycemic Index is a scale that rates foods by how much they raise the sugar level in your blood. The lower the Glycemic Index (GI) of a food the better it may be for controlling your appetite, cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Choose whole grain products that have low GI values. Examples include: pumpernickel bread, large flake oatmeal, and barley.

Hold the fat, sugar and salt!

Read the food label to compare grain products and choose the ones that are lower in fat, trans fat, sugar and salt. Use only small amounts of spreads and sauces.

Have you tried ...?

There is practically a whole grain for each letter of the alphabet. Amaranth, Bulgur, Couscous, Quinoa, Rice, Spelt, Triticale – just to name a few. Whole grains add a delightful nutty flavour and wonderful chewy texture to cereals, salads, pilafs and baked goods. Tantalize your taste buds and try a new grain this month.

A Toast to Oats!

Dietary fibre that is called “soluble” has been shown to help lower blood cholesterol and help control blood sugar levels. Oatmeal, oat bran, barley, kidney beans, baked beans and flaxseeds are rich in soluble fibre.

Grandma called it ‘roughage’!

Insoluble fibre found in wheat bran, corn bran, flax seeds, fruits and vegetables (especially the skins), is needed to help keep you regular and prevent constipation. Be sure to drink plenty of water when eating foods with large amounts of insoluble fibre.

Low marks for “low-carb” diets

Weight loss diets that promote a very low carbohydrate intake get a poor grade from nutrition experts. Our bodies need at least 130 grams of carbohydrate each day to get the glucose or sugar that fuels our brains. Low-carb diets also tend to be low in fibre, vitamins and minerals and are, therefore, unhealthy if followed for any length of time.