

# Grain Foods

## Part of a healthy diet

### FACT SHEET

Grain foods like bread, breakfast cereal, rice and pasta are an important part of a healthy diet. The *Australian Dietary Guidelines* recommend enjoying a wide variety of these foods because choosing good quality grain foods everyday can help keep you healthy now and in the long term.<sup>1</sup> Read on to find out why grains are important, how often we should eat them and which grain foods to choose.

#### The ultimate multi-vitamin

Grains are one of the main sources of key nutrients essential for growth, brain function and immunity.<sup>2,3</sup> In fact, whole grains contain more than 26 different natural substances which may help to keep us healthy.<sup>4</sup>



#### Did you know?

The fibre in grain foods helps promote the growth of good bugs in your bowel.<sup>5</sup> Healthy levels of these bugs may be linked to a whole host of benefits from staying a healthy weight to better mental health in old age.<sup>6,7</sup>

#### Keeping you healthier for longer

People who eat whole grain and high fibre grain foods are less likely to develop diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.<sup>8</sup>

#### How much do I need?

Enjoy grain foods 3-4 times a day. Make at least half the grains in your day either high fibre or whole grain foods.

#### Trying to lose weight a healthy way?



Making good grain food choices as part of a calorie-controlled diet will mean you don't miss out on the essential nutrients found in grain foods. That's why healthy 'higher protein' diets include whole grain and high fibre grain foods like whole grain bread each day.<sup>9,10</sup>

Also, the fibre in grain foods helps keep your digestion working well.<sup>11</sup> This helps stop you feeling sluggish and gives you the energy to enjoy regular exercise, another key to weight loss.

#### How to make the healthier choice

- ✓ Check the ingredient list and choose the food with a higher percent whole grain.
- ✓ Look at the nutrition information panel on the side of the pack. Choose the food with more fibre.

#### Want to make a healthy change? Swap it!

Australians get more than 33% of their energy from grain foods that are less-healthy.<sup>12</sup> Not only are these foods high in saturated fat and salt, they have very few of the nutrients we need to stay healthy. For a healthy change swap to lower kilojoule, higher nutrient grain foods today!

From this	To a more nutritious choice
Banana bread	Whole grain English muffin and a banana
Packet of corn chips	Lite butter popcorn
Cafe muffin	Raisin toast



**Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council**

*Cultivating Good Health*

# Enjoy Grain Foods 3 – 4 times a day. It's so easy and good for you too.

**BREAKFAST:** High fibre breakfast cereal with milk and piece of fruit

**SNACK:** Whole grain crispbread with cheese and tomato

**LUNCH:** Multi grain sandwich and piece of fruit

**SNACK:** Handful of almonds

**DINNER:** Grilled salmon with rice and vegetables  
and then yoghurt dessert



*Choose these grain  
foods at least half  
of the time*

- ✓ Whole grain, or
- ✓ Higher fibre, or
- ✓ Low GI

## More meal and snack ideas

**MAKE TIME FOR BREAKFAST:** Try porridge, whole grain or high fibre cereals, or toasted wholemeal bread with an egg

**TAKE YOUR LUNCH TO WORK:** Use the toaster to make rye bread bruschetta or toss pasta with vinaigrette, and lots of vegetables then add a boiled egg

**PLAN YOUR SNACKS:** Give the kids plain or lightly buttered popped corn or whole grain crackers with hummus dip

### GET CREATIVE WITH DINNER:

- Try buckwheat noodles (Soba)
- Add barley to soups, casseroles or risotto
- Use lower GI rice (i.e. basmati rice) for stir fry and in salads
- Make salads with different grains like couscous, millet or quinoa

Check out some quick and easy recipes like Chunky Quinoa Soup or Pork and Plum Couscous at [www.glnc.org.au](http://www.glnc.org.au).

Visit [www.glnc.org.au](http://www.glnc.org.au) to download recipes, fact sheets and subscribe to GLNC's e-newsletter to learn more about the benefits of grains and legumes. | For all references cited go to [www.glnc.org.au/resources/fact-sheet-references](http://www.glnc.org.au/resources/fact-sheet-references).



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