

Whole Grain Myth Busting



MYTH ONE: Carbs cause inflammation

Research suggests that consuming good quality whole grain carbohydrates, like quinoa and brown rice, are beneficial for reducing inflammation in your body which may assist in the prevention of diseases like diabetes and heart disease.

This is because whole grains contain a wide range of naturally occurring vitamins, mineral, dietary fibre and phytochemicals which have anti inflammatory effects. The claim that all grain foods and carbohydrates increase inflammation appears false, as the available evidence supports recommendations for people to enjoy good quality carbs like whole grain wheat, brown rice, rolled oats, quinoa, and rye.

MYTH TWO: Eliminating carbs is the key to weight loss

Carbohydrate foods, including whole grain foods, aren't the enemy. Research shows that there is no association between eating grains and weight gain. The key to weight loss is to control your portion intake, avoid foods that are energy dense and nutrient poor such as sweets and pastries, and stay physically active.

In fact, studies have shown that eating good quality whole grains may assist in weight loss by helping you to feel fuller for longer and controlling appetite. To consume good quality grains, try swapping white refined grains like white rice for whole grains such as brown rice, rolled oats, quinoa, wheat bran, and rye.

MYTH THREE: It takes time to improve the gut microbiome

Our gut contains thousands and thousands of microbial species. For better health, we want the number of good species to outweigh the bad ones. Research shows that people who follow a plant based diet have a more diverse gut microbiome compared to those who consume an animal based diet.

Research shows that the gut microbiome responds quickly to dietary changes. In fact, it can take as little as 2 hours to see positive changes to the gut microbiome following the intake of plant foods such as whole grain and legumes.

MYTH FOUR: All ultra processed food should be avoided

Ultra processed foods, like soft drinks and confectionary, are linked with development of chronic diseases as they are energy dense and nutrient poor. But not all ultra processed foods should be avoided.

Whole grain breakfast cereal and packaged breads are classified as ultra processed, despite being considered core foods in the Australian Dietary Guidelines. This classification of whole grain breakfast cereals and packaged breads as ultra-processed completely overlooks the nutrient contribution of these foods to the total diet, particularly dietary fibre, folate, thiamin, iron and magnesium. Eliminating core whole grain foods from our diet will lead to reduced intakes of key nutrients such as folic acid and iodine, which have important public health implications.

MYTH FIVE: If I have coeliac disease I can't enjoy whole grains

If you are diagnosed with coeliac disease, it is recommended that that you follow a gluten free diet for life but that doesn't mean need to avoid all whole grain foods completely. There are so many grains that are naturally gluten free available on supermarket shelves, and the best part of it is that these gluten free grains contain so many beneficial nutrients such as dietary fibre, vitamins and minerals.

Gluten free grains options that you can consume safely include rice brown, white, corn, quinoa, buckwheat, amaranth, millet, teff, and sorghum.