



# Choosing whole-grain foods

**Whole grains are important sources of nutrients such as zinc, magnesium, B vitamins, and fiber.** There are many choices available to make half your grains whole grains. But whole-grain foods should be handled with care. Over time and if not properly stored, oils in whole grains can cause spoilage. Consider these tips to select whole-grain products and keep them fresh to eat.

## 1 Search the label

Whole grains can be an easy choice when preparing meals. Choose whole-grain breads, breakfast cereals, and pastas. Look at the Nutrition Facts labels and ingredients lists to find choices lower in sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 2/3 cup (54g) Servings Per Container About 6	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 240	
Total Fat 12g	
Sodium 250mg	
Total Carbohydrate 45g	
Dietary Fiber 3g	
Sugars 15g	
Protein 6g	
Vitamin A 10%	
Vitamin C 5%	
Calcium 2%	
Iron 10%	

## 2 Look for the word “whole” at the beginning of the ingredients list

Some whole-grain ingredients include whole oats, whole-wheat flour, whole-grain corn, whole-grain brown rice, and whole rye. Foods that say “multi-grain,” “100% wheat,” “high fiber,” or are brown in color may not be a whole-grain product.

## 3 Choose whole grains at school

Prepare meals and snacks with whole grains at home so your kids are more likely to choose whole-grain foods at school.



## 4 Find the fiber on label

If the product provides at least 3 grams of fiber per serving, it is a good source of fiber. If it contains 5 or more grams of fiber per serving, it is an excellent source of fiber.

## 5 Is gluten in whole grains?

People who can't eat wheat gluten can eat whole grains if they choose carefully. There are many whole-grain products, such as buckwheat, certified gluten-free oats or oatmeal, popcorn, brown rice, wild rice, and quinoa that fit gluten-free diet needs.

## 6 Check for freshness

Buy whole-grain products that are tightly packaged and well sealed. Grains should always look and smell fresh. Also, check the expiration date and storage guidelines on the package.

## 7 Keep a lid on it

When storing whole grains from bulk bins, use containers with tight-fitting lids and keep in a cool, dry location. A sealed container is important for maintaining freshness and reducing bug infestations.



## 8 Buy what you need

Purchase smaller quantities of whole-grain products to reduce spoilage. Most grains in sealed packaging can be kept in the freezer.

## 9 Wrap it up

Whole-grain bread is best stored at room temperature in its original packaging, tightly closed with a quick-lock or twist tie. The refrigerator will cause bread to lose moisture quickly and become stale. Properly wrapped bread will store well in the freezer.



## 10 What's the shelf life?

Since the oil in various whole-grain flours differs, the shelf life varies too. Most whole-grain flours keep well in the refrigerator for 2 to 3 months and in the freezer for 6 to 8 months. Cooked brown rice can be refrigerated 3 to 5 days and can be frozen up to 6 months.