

Where do grains fit in your diet?

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(HealthDay)—To cut calories, you may be tempted to cut out carbs in the form of grains. But that could be a mistake—for a variety of reasons.

The answer is to choose the right kind of grains—whole grains rather than refined or over-processed white bread, rice and pasta. A whole grain contains all parts of the kernel or seed—the bran, the germ and the endosperm. Together, they deliver important B vitamins, numerous minerals, some protein and important fiber.

This makes whole grains nourishing and filling and also helps you stay regular. According to the U.S. 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, at least half of your daily grain servings should be whole grains.

If you're eating 1,200 calories a day, aim for 4 one-ounce servings of grains daily. Depending on the grain, one serving has between 100 and 170 calories. It could be one slice of bread or a half cup of cereal or one ounce of pasta. Read labels to know exactly what you're getting so your choices fit into your calorie limit.

Oatmeal and 100 percent bran flakes are great whole grain cereals, offering different types of fiber. For variety at breakfast, try a whole wheat waffle topped with a dollop of yogurt.

Use whole grains like barley, brown or wild rice, couscous, polenta and quinoa as side dishes in place of white rice. Love pasta? Choose whole-wheat varieties. Also, experiment with whole grain salads like tabbouleh, which is cooked bulgur mixed with chopped tomatoes, parsley, onions and mint.

For a snack, air-popped popcorn can't be beat. Each 30-calorie tablespoon of kernels pops into one cup of popcorn.

Just be sure to measure portions carefully because even these nutritious calories can add up fast. But in measured amounts, whole [grains](#) can have a supporting role in your successful diet.

More information: The Whole Grains Council has a wealth of information, from the [nutrients in whole grains](#) to tasty recipes to try.

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