

# Brown rice offers more benefits in a healthy diet

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Credit: Earth100/Wikipedia

Researchers at the University of Adelaide are urging Australians to consume brown or black rice, instead of white rice, as part of a healthy diet.

Despite being the staple food of more than half of the world's

population, rice has fallen out of favour in Western nations in recent years because of the popularity of high-protein, low-carbohydrate diets.

"It's often perceived that starchy foods such as rice are associated with weight gain. However, it's really the quality of the carbohydrate that makes the difference," says Dr Zumin Shi from the University of Adelaide's School of Medicine.

"There is growing evidence that whole grains are beneficial in terms of body weight regulation. Large studies conducted over the last 10-15 years have shown that a high rice intake is associated with weight control and an overall reduced risk of high blood pressure and abnormal blood fats.

"This needs to be considered alongside other studies that show rice intake may increase blood sugar and the risk of diabetes."

Dr Shi says because rice is often cooked in water, it contains a lower energy density than a staple diet based on wheat.

"It's clear from the available evidence that substituting rice for flour will offer health benefits, even more so if brown or black (unrefined) rice is consumed rather than white (refined) rice," he says.

"Unrefined rice contains important structures such as the grain and bran. The refining process destroys the structure of the grain kernel and removes dietary fibre and other essential micronutrients."

Dr Shi says the glycaemic index (GI) of rice can also be changed, providing further potential dietary benefits. "If you cook rice, then cool it in the fridge, the glycaemic index in the cooled rice will be reduced by the time you eat it the next day. So this can be a way to help counter the increased blood glucose associated with rice."

As with any foods, Dr Shi says moderation is the key to a [healthy diet](#): "Portion sizes of meals are always important - eating large amounts of rice with every meal is not recommended. People should also be aware that if they eat rice with other starchy foods such as bread and potatoes, they will not gain the dietary benefits they're looking for."

Dr Shi is co-author of a chapter on [rice](#) in the recently published book, [Wheat and Rice in Disease Prevention and Health](#).

Provided by University of Adelaide

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