

Why whole grains are the healthier choice

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Want to be a healthier eater? Focus on whole grains. These unrefined grains are linked to a lower risk for heart disease, certain cancers and other health problems.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends at least half of all the [grains](#) you eat be whole grains.

Not all breads are created equal.

"The healthiest bread option is something that is made with whole grains," explains Angie Murad, a dietitian with the Mayo Clinic Healthy Living Program. "It needs to say whole grain."

Murad says that's true for bread and other grain products, like crackers, pastas and rice.

Whole grains are unrefined, meaning they still contain the bran and germ.

"The bran provides fiber," adds Murad. "It also provides antioxidants."

The germ delivers B vitamins, protein and some healthy fat.

"When you include all parts of the grain, there are health benefits," adds Murad.

Murad says to be aware of packages with sound-alike slogans.

"So, if it says cracked wheat or multigrain or seven-grain, those don't guarantee that it's a whole grain," says Murad.

Some whole-grain products contain a special stamp, noting the benefit. Otherwise, Murad says to look to the ingredients list for verification.

"Whole grain: That's what you're looking for," stresses Murad.

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