Grain Products

Grain Products contain most of the energy you need to fuel your day. Whether you are studying, reading, playing sports, working out at the gym, or dancing at a club - your body requires carbs (carbohydrates) in the form of Grain Products.

Despite what some fad diets and popular magazines may tell you, carbohydrates are necessary and are good for you. Carbs are our body’s preferred fuel for energy, and Grain Products are our main source of carbohydrates. Grain Products also contain fibre and important vitamins and minerals such as thiamin, riboflavin, niacin and folate, iron, zinc and magnesium.

Foods made mainly from wheat like bread, bagels, crackers, pizza crust, pancakes, roti, chapatti, naan, pita, pasta, bannock, and couscous are common examples of Grain Products.

Other commonly eaten Grain Products are foods made from corn (like tortillas, corn cereal), rice (rice cakes, rice noodles, rice crackers, puffed rice cereal), or oats (oatmeal, oat bran, granola bars). There are many other grains that are not as popular in the Canadian diet.

What are “Whole Grains”?

“Whole grains” are foods that have not been refined or processed, so that their outer shell (which is high in fibre, vitamins, and minerals) remains part of the starchy component of the grain.

Amaranth, barley, brown rice, bulgur, millet, oats, quinoa, spelt, triticale and whole wheat are some examples of healthy “whole grains”.

Canada’s Food Guide recommends choosing at least half of the Grain Products we eat as whole grains each day because of the bran they contain and our bodies need.

“Refined grains” or foods that contain milled flour from the different grains - like pastries, donuts, cookies, cake, and muffins and even white bread and buns - are not the best choices because they missing the bran/fibre part of the grain, and some contain high amounts of fat and sugar.
**How Much Should I Be Eating?**

*Canada’s Food Guide* recommends that **females** age 19-50 eat **6-7 servings** per day and **males** age 19-50 eat **8 servings** of Grain Products.

What is considered a “serving” depends on the food you are eating:
- 1 serving of bread or pizza crust = 1 (35g) slice
- 1 serving of pita, bagel, roti, bannock, chapatti, naan, or tortilla = usually ½ (equalling 35 g)
- 1 serving of hot cereal (millet, oatmeal, oat bran, quinoa) = 3/4 cup (175 mL) cooked
- 1 serving of cold cereal = 30 g; depending on the size of the cereal, flakes or nuggets, this can be 2/3 cup (150 mL) to 1 cup (250 mL)
- 1 serving of cooked rice, cooked pasta or other grains = ½ cup (125 mL)

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**Easy Quinoa Salad Recipe**

*A little bit sweet, a little bit salty, both chewy and crunchy – this healthy salad has it all!*

**INGREDIENTS**
- 15 mL (1 Tablespoon) olive oil
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 250 mL (1 cup) uncooked quinoa, rinsed and drained
- 500 mL (2 cups) chicken or vegetable broth
- 150 mL (2/3 cup) dried cranberries
- 150 mL (2/3 cup) sliced almonds or sunflower seeds

**DIRECTIONS**
1. Heat oil in a medium pot over medium high heat. Add onions and cook, stirring often, until just softened (about 2 to 3 minutes).
2. Add quinoa and heat, stirring constantly, for about 1 minute.
3. Stir in broth and bring to a boil; then reduce heat to medium low, cover and simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Stir in cranberries, cover again and continue to cook until liquid is completely absorbed and quinoa is tender (about 8 to 10 minutes more).
5. Meanwhile, place almonds or sunflower seeds in a small skillet (no added oil necessary) and toast over medium heat (until golden brown). Allow to cool slightly, then toss with the quinoa mixture.

Enjoy hot or cold as a quick lunch or side dish!

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**Did you Know?**

A large **take-out slice of pizza** is equivalent to about 4 slices of bread, or **4 servings of Grain Products** (average 300 g slice contains 85 g carbohydrates).

Ordering a **bagel** at your favourite coffee stop usually gives you around **3 servings of Grain Products** (115 g bagel has 50 g carbohydrates).

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**Need some FREE professional help?**

The Health & Counselling Centre at UTM (Davis Building, Room 1123) has a **Registered Dietitian** who can assess your diet and help you make changes. Call (905) 828–5255 to make an appointment.