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Uncovering The Whole Truth About Whole Grains

By News Canada

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by: **News Canada**

(NC)—A research poll recently revealed that only seven percent of Canadians understand the important distinction between a complete whole grain product and a grain product*. Even though Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating recommends five to twelve servings from the grain group each day – clearly emphasizing whole grains – most of us aren't making the wisest of food choices! To help you boost your intake, registered dietitian Rosie Schwartz offers the following whole grain information and advice.

Whole grains consist of all three parts of a grain, including: the fibre-rich outer coating of bran; the middle layer of the grain called the endosperm; and, the nutrient-packed inner germ. During the milling or refining process, both the bran and germ are removed from refined grains leaving only the endosperm, the least nutritious part of the grain. Therefore, these refined products do not provide as much nutritional value and health benefits as whole grain products.

Recent research links whole grains to a number of disease-fighting benefits. It suggests that antioxidants contained in whole grains may work with other compounds, including fibre, to reduce cholesterol and overall risk for heart disease. Research has also shown that whole grains appear to play an important role in reducing the risk of certain cancers and type 2 diabetes. For most of us, the fibre in whole grains has always been identified as a benefit to overall bowel health. It helps remove waste products, supports the growth of healthy bacteria and promotes regularity.

Incorporating whole grains into your diet is easy and starts at the grocery store. Lots of great whole grain product options are available in everyday foods such as bread, cereal and pasta. Here are tips that Rosie Schwartz offers to identify these products:

- Scan the ingredient list: whole grain foods will list a whole grain - such as wheat, oats, corn or rice - as the first ingredient. Look for words "whole" or "whole grain" before the name of the grain.

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- Don't be fooled by products that claim to be made with whole grain flour. You need to see whole grain flour listed as the first ingredient in order to achieve the greatest benefit.
- Read labels - opt for "whole wheat" over just "wheat," "brown rice" over "enriched white rice" and "whole rye" over "rye."

For more information on incorporating whole grains into your diet, visit www.wholegrainsbureau.ca.

* Findings of a L  ger Marketing poll conducted in August, 2003 on behalf of the Whole Grains Bureau. The poll is based on a random sample of 1,100 adult English Canadians.

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Diabetic Gains From Nutritious Whole Grains

By Moss Greene

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My mother was a diabetic and when she was diagnosed, it was called adult onset diabetes. Do you know why they changed the name to type 2? I'm afraid the sad truth is it can no longer be called "adult," because the deadly type 2 diabetes is now showing up in children.

Diabetes has been dramatically on the increase for the past century. Today about 23 million Americans are diabetic and one quarter of those are undiagnosed. Whereas people don't generally die of diabetes, they just go blind or lose their limbs, it often leads to heart disease. And heart disease is our biggest premature killer.

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Native Americans, who at one time had no diabetes, now have the highest incidence in the world.

What happened?

Traditionally, they had lived on an all natural, unrefined diet. Once they were moved to reservations, their only choice was a modern "white man's diet" of refined foods. Since then, there's been a huge jump in the incidence of Native American diabetes. Among the Pima Indians in Southwest Arizona, 40%

of the population are type 2 diabetics. Interestingly enough, they're eating many of the same foods that they were eating on their traditional diet. Only today, they're using refined versions of those foods - refined corn products, refined sugars and refined grains.

Although we've known this information for many years, a peer review study just published in this month's American Journal of Clinical Nutrition has proven that whole grains, such as brown rice, oatmeal and whole wheat, can help protect people from diabetes.

The team of researchers from Simmons College, Harvard Medical School, followed the eating habits of 43,000 men (ages 40 to 75) for about 12 years. Although they all started out healthy, nearly 3% developed diabetes in just over a decade. What were they eating?

Those who ate the least amount of whole grains had a 60% higher incidence of developing type 2 diabetes than those eating the highest level of whole grains. But there's even more evidence. And, this is a real shocker. Obese men who ate the highest amount of whole grains, and were also physically active, developed 52% less type 2 diabetes, even though they were overweight.

Two other recent studies focusing on women and whole grains confirmed these same Harvard findings: whole grains can help protect from diabetes and possibly other degenerative diseases.

Why?

Whole grains are low glycemic carbohydrates. This means lower blood sugar and less insulin production. But refined grains are high glycemic carbohydrates that more than double blood sugar

levels. This causes an insulin surge to clear sugar out of the blood. After a while, the body is no longer capable of handling this blood sugar onslaught. That's when a person becomes a type 2 diabetic. Then high blood sugar can increase the risk of diabetic related heart disease, kidney failure and blindness.

The Harvard research team's conclusion to this study was to recommend that people eat more whole grains. They said, "Whole grain products" have "the potential to reduce substantially the incidence of type 2 diabetes and possibly other chronic diseases when sustained over time."

Makes a lot of sense to me. Whole grains are in their natural, nutritious form, just the way they were meant to be. You see, "It's not nice to try and fool Mother Nature." And, in her never-to-be-humble opinion, she doesn't mind telling us, "I told you so!"

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Moss Greene is the Nutrition Host at Bellaonline.com. Visit her web site at <http://www.bellaonline.com/site/nutrition> to find out how to look better, feel your best and have more energy –naturally. Subscribe now to the News You Can Use Newsletter by going to <http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art3859.asp>

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