

Total Nutrition

Whole Grains And Diabetes: A Simple Approach

(NAPSA)—Do you eat at least three daily servings of whole grain foods like whole grain bread or cereal? Many Americans don't, even though they're good for health. According to several recent studies, eating whole grain foods may help



Mindy Hermann

reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes. People with diabetes do not process blood sugar properly and the disease can increase risk of kidney disease, vision problems, poor circulation, heart disease and other health problems.

The prevalence of type 2 diabetes in the U.S. has tripled over the past 30 years and currently affects about one in five adults over age 65. It also is becoming more common among children, teens and young adults. Certain ethnic groups—Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Hispanic Americans, African Americans—have the greatest chance of developing the disease.

Here's the good news. "A number of studies suggest that eating at least three servings of whole grain foods daily may help reduce diabetes risk," says Marion Franz, M.S., R.D., C.D.E., owner of Nutrition Concepts by Franz and co-chair of the American Diabetes Association's 2002 dietary recommendations committee. "Whole grain foods also may help manage diabetes because eating them improves the body's response to insulin, the hormone that controls blood glucose."

Simple lifestyle changes can delay or even prevent diabetes.

Diabetes Risk Factors

- Abdominal obesity
- Sedentary lifestyle
- High fat diet
- Parent with diabetes
- Diabetes during pregnancy
- Susceptible ethnic group
- High blood pressure
- High blood cholesterol

The American Diabetes Association recommends eating particular foods with carbohydrates: whole grain foods, fruits, vegetables, and low-fat milk. Exercise should be moderate intensity, 30 minutes on most days. If you currently are sedentary, increase your activity slowly and gradually toward the 30 minute goal. Modest weight loss, just 5 to 7 percent of present weight, can help return blood sugar levels to normal by helping the body respond to insulin.

Ask Mindy

Q: How can I get my spouse to eat whole grain foods?

A: Limit the choices at home to mostly whole grain foods. For breakfast, offer whole grain hot cereal like oatmeal or ready-to-eat breakfast cereals like Whole Grain Total. Make lunch sandwiches on whole wheat bread, English muffin or pita. At dinner, have brown rice instead of white rice, make spaghetti and meat sauce with whole wheat pasta, and try other grains like bulgur wheat, whole wheat couscous or quinoa, a South American grain with a nutty flavor.