

Are Whole Grains Healthy?

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Thirty years ago I would have said yes. However, agriculture has change drastically.

Whole grains contain bran, germ and endosperm. Bran is the fiber in the outer layer that contains B vitamins, iron, copper, zinc, magnesium, antioxidants and phytochemicals. The germ is the outer core of the seed that is rich in fats, vitamin E, B vitamins, phytochemicals and antioxidants. The endosperm is the interior layer that holds carbohydrates, protein and small amounts of some B vitamins and minerals. The milling process removes up to 75 percent of its phytochemicals during the milling process. Milling also removes some of the fats and fiber.

In the 1990s glyphosate, aka Roundup, an herbicide that grains are sprayed with to increase production, was introduced. This herbicide is passed onto the consumer. Law firms are advertising that Roundup has recently been found to cause cancer and offer financial compensation.

The human race survived on wheat for 14,000 years. Now, people are reacting to wheat. Some and only some health care professionals blame gluten. Gluten-free has become a multi-billion dollar industry. Many stories have been told of people who eat wheat in Italy without any reaction, but react to wheat in the U.S. The difference is glyphosate and possibly other chemical toxins, not the gluten. The amount of people who have celiac disease and gluten intolerance is less than one percent of the population.

Organic grains have less chemicals used in their production. However, they may also absorb toxic chemicals from the air. Most of the chemicals are removed when the outer bran and germ is removed. Some people react to brown rice, but not to white rice. Some people react to whole wheat flour, but not white flour.

Conclusion: Whole grains contain more nutrients than milled grains, however they also contain more toxic chemicals. If the choice is between toxic chemicals or food with a little less nutrients, it seem the latter is a better choice.

Organic white rice and organic white flour appear to be the healthiest choice in today's society.