WHY SHOULD YOU CHOOSE WHOLE GRAINS?

Have you ever wondered what's so great about whole grains? Keep reading to learn a little bit more about why whole grains are so important. Your body will thank you later!

by Ashley Sineath, MPH

WHAT'S GREAT ABOUT WHOLE GRAINS:

1. **DIETARY FIBER**
   Whole grains are often rich in fiber. Dietary fiber helps your stomach feel more full by slowing down digestion. It may also help with regular bowel movements.

2. **SOURCE OF B-VITAMINS**
   These vitamins pack a big punch as they help regulate metabolism, your nervous system, and help form red blood cells! Some B-vitamins include: thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and folate.

3. **PREVENT DISEASE**
   When you incorporate whole grains into your diet, you may help reduce your risk of heart disease, and high cholesterol just to name a few!

4. **OTHER VITAMINS**
   Whole grains also contain iron, magnesium, and selenium. These vitamins all play vital roles in the functioning of different systems in your body such as your immune system.

A COUPLE TIPS:

1. Not used to whole wheat? Try mixing 1/2 wheat and 1/2 white products to start off.

2. Make sure and read the food label and look for "WHOLE grain" or "WHOLE wheat." This is not the same as "MULTI" grain.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN:

Think through the lens of making a "swap." You can start with swapping whole grains for enriched or refined grains.

Meal Planning Ideas

1. **BREAKFAST**
   - Oatmeal (try it with fresh fruit!)
   - Whole grain cereal
   - Whole wheat english muffin
   - Whole wheat waffles
   - Whole wheat pancakes
   - 1/2 Whole wheat bagel

2. **LUNCH**
   - Whole wheat sandwich or pita bread
   - Whole wheat tortilla or quesadilla
   - Whole wheat pasta or pasta salad
   - Homemade whole wheat pizza
   - Whole wheat crackers with soup or salad

3. **DINNER**
   - Wild rice or brown rice (short or long grain)
   - Whole wheat spaghetti noodles
   - Whole wheat tortillas for tacos
   - Whole wheat rolls
   - Add quinoa, bulgar wheat, or barley to soup