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Title

How and where do whole-grain foods fit in healthy, sustainable diets?

Abstract

There is strong and convincing evidence that whole-grain foods should be consumed as part of a healthy diet pattern. Whole-grain cereals provide a mixture of starchy carbohydrates, a small amount of free sugars and a myriad of types of dietary fiber depending on the grain type. They are also important sources of protein, micronutrients, minerals and phytochemicals. This combination confers health benefits which result in lower risk of developing chronic diseases such as CVD, Type 2 Diabetes and some cancers for those consuming whole grain compared with non-consumers. Despite these benefits, and attempts by some health agencies to promote their consumption, intake of whole grain is universally low, and consumers find identifying them difficult. Standard definitions of whole grain and whole-grain foods to allow for robust labelling policies will help consumers identify healthy whole-grain food options. Encouraging health professionals to promote whole grain is also important as switching to more plant-based diets will be necessary if targets for dietary fiber intake are to be achieved. A change to a diet pattern less reliant on animal products with higher intakes of cereals, pulses, fruits and vegetables will also result in a more sustainable diet.

The presentation will discuss these factors and explore not only the overall health benefits of consuming more whole-grain foods, but also their impact on the sustainability of the diet. The consequences of switching from refined grain to whole grain products on dietary fiber intake will be discussed as an example of the benefits of whole grain consumption.

Key references

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definition of 'whole grain'. *Food & Nutrition Research* **58** 22100 - <http://dx.doi.org/10.3402/fnr.v58.22100>.

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Key messages

Whole grains are an essential component of a healthy diet and they should be promoted to all consumers.

Whole-grain foods can contribute to a achieving a more sustainable dietary pattern.

It is important to establish dietary guidelines which include promotion of whole grain consumption.
