So, what are whole grains? Consumed daily, whole grains offer a number of health benefits. Whole grains provide antioxidants, Vitamin E, B vitamins, fiber, trace minerals, and energy. These nutrients reduce the risk of stroke, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers. Fiber, a carbohydrate found in whole grains, does not break down during digestion. Regular intake of fiber keeps your appetite in check by giving you a feeling of fullness.

Examples of whole grains are oats, barley, quinoa, buckwheat, bulgur, brown rice, and corn. Many baked goods and processed foods claim to be whole grain, but be observant when buying these products! Look at the package ingredients and choose items that list “100% whole grain” or “100% whole wheat” as the first ingredient. Don’t be misled by packaging stating “100% wheat” or “multi-grain.”
The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend choosing whole grains for half of the grains you consume daily.

What counts as a serving of whole grains? By definition, one serving is equal to one ounce of food that is made from whole grains. A one-ounce serving is usually different than the serving size listed on the package, so look carefully at the "nutrition facts" label. One slice of bread is typically one ounce, as is half a small bagel, a small muffin, ½ cup of cooked rice or pasta, or 5 whole grain crackers.

Here are some ways to incorporate whole grains into your meals:

**Breakfast** – shredded wheat, oatmeal (instant or cooked), whole grain bagels, whole grain English muffins, and whole grain pancakes

**Lunch** – sandwich made on whole grain bread or tortillas, wild rice or barley soups, whole grain pasta salads, baked corn chips

**Dinner** – whole grain casseroles or stews, whole wheat rolls, crushed bran flakes (for coating for chicken or fish), wild rice, whole wheat pasta

**Snacks** – popcorn, baked tortilla chips, whole grain crackers, toasted oat cereals, granola