

Asset HealthTalk

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know

September 2016

Mix up Your Whole Grains With *Ancient and Modern Grains*

A recent study by Harvard, published in the journal *Circulation*, found that people who consumed whole grains daily had a lower risk of dying from any cause compared to those who didn't.

This doesn't prove that whole grains prevent early death, but it adds to increasing evidence that whole grains really are full of goodness, which is possibly why ancient grains are now trending among food lovers.

What are ancient grains? They are grains that have never been processed through hybridization or genetic modification unlike modern grains, such as wheat, corn and rice.

Ancient grains include: teff, einkorn, emmer, amaranth, millet, quinoa, black rice, black barley, spelt, bulgur, farro, Khorasan wheat, sorghum and more.

Ancient grains sometimes contain more calories than modern grains, but they provide more protein, fiber and vitamins. This doesn't mean you should write off modern grains; the goal is to eat a variety of whole grains.

Here are some suggestions for adding whole grains to your diet:

1 Start with familiar whole grains. Switch to a whole-grain version of something you already eat, such as brown or wild rice instead of white rice, or whole-grain bread instead of white bread.

2 Go gradually. Add whole grains to your diet a little at a time. Try mixing oats into a meatloaf or even into chocolate chip cookies. Or, try eating oatmeal or whole-grain cereals for breakfast.

3 Take shortcuts. You can speed up the process of cooking whole grains, except for pasta, by soaking them first. Also, instead of cooking grains on a stovetop, use a microwave to shorten the cooking time.

4 Rethink snacks. Popcorn is a great substitute for chips and pretzels because it is a whole grain! There are also increasing varieties of whole-grain crackers.

5 Be adventurous. Try some new grains or revisit some you might have forgotten about. Quinoa comes in three colors and is easy to find in most grocery stores now.

6 Don't be fooled. Look for "whole grain" on the label when shopping for packaged baked goods or cereals. Make sure that whole grains are at the top of the ingredients list and the list is relatively short.

Whole grains are as easy to cook and use as white rice. All you have to do is combine the dry grain and liquid in a pot with water or broth, bring it to a boil, then simmer until the liquid is absorbed. The amount of liquid needed and the simmer time will vary based on the type of grain used.

"The Whole Grain Goodness of Modern and Ancient Grains," Heidi Godman, health.harvard.edu, June 29, 2016.

"6 Suggestions for Adding Whole Grains to Your Diet," Harvard Health Publications, health.harvard.edu, July 2016.

HEALTHY SNACKS TO ENERGIZE YOUR FAMILY

It's back-to-school time. If you're trying to cut back on packaged food, here's a homemade snack your whole family will love. Make these energy bites to have on hand to send your kids to class with a nutritious snack. You'll enjoy bringing them to work, too!



NO-BAKE ENERGY BITES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup oatmeal
- ½ cup peanut butter (or other nut butter)
- ⅓ cup honey
- 1 cup coconut flakes
- ½ cup ground flaxseed
- ½ cup mini chocolate chips or cacao nibs
- 1 tsp vanilla

(Adapted from smashedpeasandcarrots.com)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix the ingredients in a medium bowl until thoroughly incorporated. *Hint:* It helps to mix the nut butter, honey and vanilla together first, then add the dry ingredients.
2. Chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.
3. Roll into balls and enjoy!

Makes 18 to 20 bites

These energy bites can be stored in an airtight container and refrigerated for up to one week.

Why Switching to

GREEN CLEANING

Is Significant for You and the Environment

In the past, you may have purchased a cleaning product without giving it much thought. You selected the brand you knew, the one you trusted. Today, it's rare to not have a large selection

to choose from; sometimes it can even be overwhelming. While it's nice to have a choice, many cleaning products can put your health at risk. When you clean with chemicals, you

breathe them in. When you do dishes or laundry, you can absorb toxins through your skin. You could be exposing yourself to more dangerous substances than you realize. Plus, it's all just

going straight back into your community's water supply. So how do you choose a cleaning product that is both eco-friendly and safe for you and your family?

What to Look for When Choosing a Green Cleaning Product

When selecting an eco-friendly cleaning product, confirm that it's made from naturally occurring, non-toxic ingredients. Look for products with plant-derived surfactants (the class of chemicals that act as cleansing agents). Avoid cleaning products that contain phosphates, chlorine and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) – all of which can be harmful to both you and the planet.

One of the most prevalent natural surfactants derived from citrus is d-limonene. Other naturally occurring substances that make excellent all-purpose cleaners include lauramine oxide, TEA lauryl

sulfate and caprylyl or myristyl glucoside. Soy-based cleaners also provide a safe alternative to toxic solvents. Another alternative is to use enzyme-based cleaners. These cleaners help break down organic material, such as dirt, grease and oil. Enzyme cleaners are completely non-toxic and biodegradable.

Green cleaning products are often more cost-effective. It's also easy to make your own cleaning products – everything from kitchen cleaners to laundry detergent – and many DIY recipes can be found with a simple internet search. For example, vinegar can replace mold

and mildew removers, and can be used to replace window, all-purpose and toilet bowl cleaners. This way you can

tackle various cleaning jobs in your home without having to buy multiple products.



How Chemical Cleaning Products Can Be Harmful

VOCs, which are used to boost the performance of a cleaning product, can have toxic effects, such as impaired neurological functions, while other chemicals can cause asthma, cancer, reproductive and developmental toxicity, allergies and irritations (depending upon the extent of exposure), according to the Environmental Working Group. When using chemicals, there's

also potential for accidental burns and poisonings.

Another type of substance to take note of is phosphate. Phosphates can cause eutrophication – a form of pollution – of rivers and other bodies of water, which can deplete them of oxygen, decrease water quality and pose problems for marine life.

Despite these concerns, cleaning product labels often don't provide consumers enough information about their ingredients to allow people to make informed decisions about which ones are safer and which ones might harm their health.

There are many benefits to cleaning green. It's safer and in many cases it's much more

economical. Whether you choose to make your own cleaners or switch over to new brands, green cleaning eventually becomes second nature. Armed with this knowledge, it's up to you to take control of the products you purchase for both the good of your health and the environment.