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Eating Whole Foods

Are you having trouble getting enough nutrients to fuel your active lifestyle? Do you want to achieve optimum sports performance? Eating a diet of whole foods—foods that have not had vital nutrients refined out of them—can help you get the nutrition you need to meet these goals. Below, Patti Tveit Milligan, MS, RD, corporate nutritionist for Henry's marketplace in San Diego, explains what to look for when choosing whole grains, legumes and other whole foods.

1. What Are Whole Grains? Whole grains are grains—wheat, oats, rice and so forth—that have not been refined. The refining process removes the nutritious germ and the bran. Any whole grain can be eaten as a starch dish or added to soups and casseroles. Cook grains whole: For every cup of grain, use approximately two cups of water, and cook until tender and fluffy (about 20 to 40 minutes). Some grains need more water; others require presoaking, because of their hulls.

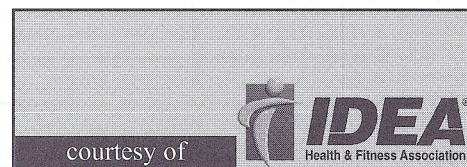
2. Are There Many Whole Grains to Choose From? Corn, wheat, oats and rice may be the grains Americans know best, but many other great whole grains are available. For example, **quinoa** (pronounced “keen-wa”) is exceptionally nutritious, containing up to 50 percent more high-quality, complete protein than other grains. The protein in quinoa contains all the amino acids (building blocks that make protein) the human body needs to obtain from food. What's more, quinoa has high levels of the amino acids lysine, methionine and cystine, which are difficult to find in nonmeat products and are thought to help detoxify the body. Quinoa is also rich in B vitamins, phosphorus, calcium, zinc and vitamin E. **Amaranth** contains more high-quality protein than any other grain except quinoa. Originally cultivated by the Aztecs and the Chinese, amaranth has a nutty, somewhat wild flavor. **Millet** contains a significant amount of iron and has a better amino acid balance than any other grains except quinoa and amaranth. **Barley** can be served as a cereal or used to thicken soups and stews.

3. Why Are Beans Considered a Near-Perfect Food? When combined with grains, seeds or dairy products, beans provide an excellent source of complete pro-

tein. High in carbohydrates and soluble fiber, one cup of beans per day can lower cholesterol as effectively as two-thirds of a cup of oat bran. Beans are a good source of vitamins B₂ and E, calcium, phosphorus, iron and potassium. They are also easy to store and prepare. Beans, as well as lentils and dried peas, are in a food category called legumes.

4. What Are Some Good Legumes? **Adzukis** are easily digested, burgundy-colored beans native to Japan. They are delicious served with rice or millet and are good with soy sauce, ginger, green pepper or winter squash. (Boil 90 minutes or pressure cook 45 minutes.) **Black beans** are the staple food of Latin America and also feature in Japanese and Chinese cuisines. Black beans and rice make a delicious dish, especially when seasoned with onions, garlic, tomatoes and lemon or lime. (Boil 90 minutes or pressure cook 45 minutes.) **Soy beans**—commonly sold as tofu, tempeh or miso—are good sources of complete protein. **Split peas** are commonly used in soups. The yellow ones have a mild flavor and need more help from other ingredients than the green ones. (Boil 90 minutes or until tender, but do not pressure cook.)

5. Are There Other Whole Foods? Many whole foods other than grains and legumes are also rich in nutrition. **Orange, red and yellow fruits and vegetables** provide antioxidant compounds like carotenoids and vitamin C. **Dark green, leafy vegetables** are an outstanding source of calcium, magnesium, folic acid and trace minerals. **Cruciferous vegetables**—such as broccoli, cauliflower and red cabbage—are thought to have cancer-preventing properties. And **sea vegetables**—such as wakame, kombu and nori—are high in boron, magnesium and B vitamins.



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