



## Consumers confused about how much is enough when it comes to whole grain in their diets

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**13<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

- *More than 8 in 10 (82%) people think it is important to eat whole grain*
- *Yet almost the same number (83%) do not know how many grams they should be eating every day and less than half (47%) think that they eat enough whole grain*
- *Over one-third (38%) say people don't know what foods contain whole grain – 1 in 10 think it's in bananas and nearly 1 in 5 (18%) think it's in white bread*
- *New research<sup>1</sup> is published ahead of 2017 International Whole Grain Summit*

There is significant confusion among consumers across the globe about how much whole grain should be consumed daily. While more than eight in 10 people (82%) believe it is important to eat whole grain, almost the same number (83%) admit they don't know how much they should consume. Less than half (47%) of those surveyed think they eat enough.

The new study of over 16,000 people across the globe by Cereal Partners Worldwide, the producer of Nestlé Breakfast Cereals, suggests that part of the confusion may be due to people not knowing how much whole grain to consume or where to find whole grain, with almost four in 10 (38%) saying they think people don't know what foods contain it.

Perhaps surprisingly, one in 10 (10%) think bananas contain whole grain. Nearly one in five (18%) believe it is typically found in white bread and 14% think it is in white rice. There is also a misperception that whole grain can be found in seeds (28%) and nuts (21%). In fact, none of these foods contain whole grain, which is commonly found in whole grain breakfast cereals, brown rice, whole grain pasta, wholemeal bread and porridge oats.

The World Health Organization recommends an increase in whole grain consumption along with increases in fruits, vegetables, legumes and nuts for the prevention of chronic disease<sup>2</sup>. Higher consumption of whole grain has been associated with a reduced risk of heart disease, obesity, type-2 diabetes and bowel cancer<sup>3</sup>.

The research also finds that one-half of those questioned (50%) think that people don't eat enough whole grain because they do not understand the benefits of doing so.



Positive messages cited by participants include that whole grain can be high in fibre (65%) and good for digestion (64%), but the broader benefits are not as widely known. Less than half (48%) believe it is good for the heart and only 18 per cent think that it can help reduce the risk of type-2 diabetes<sup>5</sup>.

Despite the benefits, only three countries – the USA, Netherlands and Denmark – have a quantitative recommendation for whole grain. The USA recommends a minimum of three servings per day (equating to at least 48g), while Denmark recommends between 64 – 75g per day, depending on gender. Denmark has seen a 72% increase in whole grain intake, following the introduction of guidelines alongside a government-backed campaign<sup>4</sup>.

An easy way for people to meet the US whole grain daily recommendation (of at least 48g) is to include eating a bowl of whole grain breakfast cereal in the morning, followed by two slices of 100% whole grain bread for lunch and a portion of whole grain pasta or brown rice for dinner.

**David Homer, President and Chief Executive Officer of Cereal Partners Worldwide, says:**

*“We know that whole grain is good for us and that it’s an important part of a balanced diet. That’s why we’ve taken significant steps over the past decade to make our breakfast cereals better, by making whole grain the main ingredient in most of our cereals and improving the nutritional profile of our products.*

*“However, our new research shows that people need help knowing how much whole grain to eat and importantly why getting more whole grain in our diets matters.*

*“We see an opportunity for governments, academics and industry to back a global commitment to help inform people about whole grain and to increase the availability of whole grain foods. The first step on this journey is to agree to a set of global guidelines for recommended daily whole grain intake.”*

**Chris Seal, Professor of Food and Human Nutrition, Newcastle University, says:**

*“Whole grain is an essential component in the diet providing us with an important source of fibre and other nutrients which help to prevent heart disease, diabetes and weight gain. Clearly we are not eating enough whole grain globally and not enough is understood about the benefits of it – we need to do more to help people understand how to achieve a balanced diet.”*

Five ways to ‘go whole grain’ are to:

- Check for ‘whole’ on the label – wholemeal, whole wheat and whole oats are all whole grains
- Swap refined (‘white’) bread, rice or pasta for whole grain varieties
- Choose a whole grain breakfast cereal
- Add another portion of whole grain at lunch and dinner, such as whole grain bread, pasta or rice
- Look out for logos which highlight whole grain



The findings are released ahead of the 2017 International Whole Grain Summit which takes place in Vienna from 13 - 15 November and brings together stakeholders in the whole grain supply chain to review the latest scientific thinking, set priorities and agree on key actions that must be taken to increase whole grain intake.

**-ENDS-**

#### **Notes to editors**

1. The research was commissioned by Cereal Partners Worldwide (CPW), the maker of Nestlé Breakfast Cereals, and undertaken online by independent research company, [Censuswide](#), in October 2017. It surveyed 16,173 adult consumers in 11 countries including: Colombia, Mexico, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom.
2. Diet, nutrition and the prevention of chronic diseases: report of a Joint WHO/FAO Expert Consultation. WHO Technical Report Series, No. 916. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2003.
3. Ye, E.Q., et al., Greater whole-grain intake is associated with lower risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and weight gain. *J Nutr*, 2012. 142(7): p. 1304-13  
Aune, D., et al., Dietary fibre, whole grains, and risk of colorectal cancer: systematic review and dose-response meta-analysis of prospective studies. *Bmj*, 2011. 343
4. Newcastle University Institute for Social Renewal, The Whole Grain Truth, May 2017. Available here: <https://blogs.ncl.ac.uk/nisr/taq/wholegrain/>
5. For more information on the health benefits of whole grain visit <http://www.eufic.org/en/whats-in-food/article/qa-whole-grain>

#### **Research data**

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#### **About Cereal Partners Worldwide**

Cereal Partners Worldwide (CPW) is a leading global breakfast cereal company and the maker of Nestlé Breakfast Cereals, including favourites such as NESQUIK®, FITNESS®, CHEERIOS® and CHOCAPIC®. With more than 50 brands to suit all ages and lifestyles, CPW strives to make breakfast better with nutritious, tasty and convenient food that helps people start their day in the best possible way.



Established in 1990, CPW is a long-standing partnership between Nestlé and General Mills, bringing together the world-class capabilities of both companies. Headquartered in Switzerland, CPW has a strong global network of 4,200 employees, 17 production facilities, four R&D centres and sales in more than 130 markets. For more information visit: [www.cerealpartners.com](http://www.cerealpartners.com)

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