

# TIME FOR CHANGE

## DON'T BLAME THE GRAIN



*"Carbs make you fat."  
"Wheat is the devil."  
"Gluten is bad."*

How many times have you heard one of these statements in the last decade? One of the greatest nutritional mistakes we can make is lumping all carbohydrates into the "BAD" category. Restricting grains completely can contribute to an imbalanced diet and keep us from enjoying some amazing nutritional powers! The truth is, grains can wreak havoc on the diet for some, igniting inflammation, digestive upset, or some perceived weight gain. Yet, if you look at the research conducted on regions of the world called Blue Zones, where carbohydrates are a main energy source, you will also find the longest life expectancies and the lowest rates of chronic disease. There is an abundance of supportive evidence to assure us that there are significant protective compounds and nutritional benefits to enjoying grain in our diets. The grain may not be to blame!

### SO, WHAT'S GOING ON?

**PROCESSING.** With the advent of extrusion, a process that separates the germ and the bran from the inner, starchy core of the grain, came a loss of vital minerals that give grains their superpowers. These are what we call "refined grains" and when unmoderated in the diet, we can miss the health benefits that come with the seeds and grasses meant to nourish our lives.

**INTRODUCTION OF MODERN GRAINS.** The wheat of today is not the wheat of yesterday. In an effort to increase yield and sustainability, the 1960s introduced Dwarf Wheat. It's a hybridized version with less nutrition and a new gluten protein called gliadin that may be linked to an increase in celiac disease, gluten sensitivities, and digestive inflammation, even in those who don't have issues with gluten.

**PROTECTIVE COMPOUNDS.** Nature is amazing. Plants contain their own natural, protective mechanisms against pests and threats called lectins. Unfortunately, these compounds can make grains, nuts and seeds, and fruit very difficult to digest. Phytic acid, also naturally found in plants, binds to minerals to allow for their release to promote plant growth when the timing is favourable. For some, these compounds, although they have known health benefits, can make grains difficult to digest and can hamper mineral absorption.



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### DON'T BLAME THE GRAIN – IT MAY BE YOUR DIGESTION

Whole grains are loaded with fibre, lower cholesterol and blood pressure, and can aid in weight loss. Unfortunately, today, our consumption of grains is largely through processed food products made with refined grain flours and commercial quick-rising yeasts. Traditional practices like soaking, fermenting, and sprouting allowed for the breakdown of compounds that impede digestion (phytate, enzyme inhibitors, gluten, etc.), maximized nutritional content, and promoted efficient absorption. When these practices are followed and the digestive process of grain is respected, grains can contribute some amazing nutritional benefits. But who has the time??!!

**To ferment grains, beans and lentils, nuts and seeds, cover with warm water and lemon juice or vinegar using a ratio of 1 tbsp vinegar to 1 cup of water. Soak for 24 to 48 hours.**

### Welcome Sprouting

It all began with a sprout! Full of concentrated nutrients and enzymes, one tiny sprout contains all the nutritional elements needed to grow one

mature plant! Sprouted grains contain active, beneficial digestive enzymes making them much more digestible than a coarse grain. They are also a source of fibre and protein. Sprouting improves the essential amino acid profile and B vitamin content, and decreases starch content placing them lower on the GI index, which helps keep blood sugars stable!



### Grow Your Sprout Skills

Easy, cheap, and tasty, sprouting is for everyone! Here is how to get started!

- 1 Choose a jar with a lid. A glass jar with a wide opening is best.
- 2 Place rinsed seeds in your jar and fill  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with cool water. Cover with cheesecloth or a breathable material to allow airflow and secure with an elastic band. Soak 8-12 hours for small seeds and 12-24 hours for larger seeds like beans.
- 3 Rinse the seeds in some cheesecloth with cool water and drain. Remove any non-seed material that you notice.
- 4 Drain the seeds well. You may want to prop the jar at an angle to drain for a longer period.
- 5 Visit your sprouts 2 or 3 times a day and rinse, drain, and repeat. You may see sprouts as early as 24 hours. You can consume sprouts at any time during their growth. Continue the process until the sprouts reach the length you prefer.
- 6 It's harvest time! When ready, give your sprouts one final rinse and dump onto an absorbent kitchen towel. Allow to dry for about an hour. Wrap in paper towel and store in the fridge in a sealed container for up to one week.

Sources:

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#### Rule of Thumb:

For your best health, consume more whole grains like oats, barley, rice, millet, and quinoa. Prepare them properly to support digestion, and moderate refined grains.