

BROWN AND WHITE RICE FAQs

Rice is the most popular grain throughout the world. More than half of the world's population rely on it for its energy, fiber and antioxidant phytonutrients, and vitamins and minerals essential for life. In the United States, we eat 24 pounds of rice per person every year.¹

Which is better nutritionally – Brown or White Rice?

The answer is both! The *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and *MyPyramid* recommend “making half of all grain servings whole,” or three servings per day for a 2,000-calorie diet. The other grain servings for the day should come from either enriched or whole grain foods, like enriched white and whole grain brown rice, both of which are linked to healthier eating according to recent research.^{2,3} Compared to people who don't eat rice, rice eaters:

- Are more likely to eat a diet consistent with the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*;
- Consume less added sugar and fat;
- Consume more nutrients, such as folic acid, potassium and iron which are contained in rice products;
- Are less likely to be overweight or have an increased waist circumference;
- Have 34% reduced risk of having high blood pressure; and
- Have a 21% reduced risk of metabolic syndrome.

Should I just switch from white rice to brown?

Both enriched white and whole grain brown rice are important in a balanced diet. Eating more whole grains is great, but not at the expense of enriched grains – the best nutrition option is to make room for both. The March of Dimes and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have said that the push for whole grains may be having an unintended consequence: women are not getting sufficient folic acid, which undermines the progress that's been made in decreasing birth defects since mandatory fortification began. White rice, like other enriched grains, is fortified with folic acid; and brown rice is great-tasting, versatile whole grain option that can easily help people meet their whole grain consumption goals. Both have a role in a healthy diet!

Enriched White Rice & Folic Acid Facts

- **Folic acid and Infant Health:** Since 1998, virtually all white rice and other enriched grains in the U.S. have been fortified with the B-vitamin folic acid to reduce the risk of neural tube defects (NTD) in newborns. By all accounts, this public health campaign has been successful:
 - Enriched grains are the primary source of folic acid in women's diets;
 - According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the incidence of NTD has decreased by 26 percent since fortification began;
 - The CDC reports that 70 percent of spina bifida cases could be prevented if women consumed 400 micrograms folic acid per day prior to becoming pregnant.
- **Benefits Throughout the Lifecycle:**
 - A growing body of research now shows that folate may also be cardioprotective, aid in neurological function, and have anti-cancer properties. A new study has even identified a possible link between men's folate intake and healthier sperm with fewer chromosomal abnormalities.

Brown Rice, a Whole Grain of Goodness

- Brown rice is a 100% whole grain and contains beneficial phytonutrients that have been found to help reduce the risk of heart disease, certain cancers, type II diabetes and potentially aid in weight maintenance.
- Recently, the Food and Drug Administration agreed that packages of whole grain brown rice would be permitted to carry a health claim stating that **“Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods and low in total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol may help reduce the risk of heart disease and certain cancers.”**
- One cup of brown rice is equivalent to two of the three recommended daily whole grain servings, and is digested more slowly than simple carbohydrates.

For more information about rice, visit www.usarice.com or contact:

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1. USA Rice Federation Domestic Usage Report, 2006-07.

2. Betres-Marquez SP, Jensen HH, Upton JL. Trends in Rice Consumption and Contribution of Rice to the Total Diet of Americans. Abstract presented at Texas Dietetic Association Meeting, Apr 2005.

3. Fulgoni III, V.L., et al. (2008) Rice consumption is associated with a greater nutrient density, lower blood pressure, decreased body weight, smaller waist circumference and a reduced risk for metabolic syndrome in adults. Experimental Biology meeting abstracts [on CD-ROM], Abstract 31081.