



In the late 90s when I was training to be a naturopath, whole grains were the foundation of a wholesome diet, right alongside vegetables and lean sources of protein. In recent years however, dietary trends are changing - many are opting for low grain or grain-free diets and there is growing data to support it.

Whole grains (brown rice, oats, barley, wheat, corn, rye, millet etc) are an excellent source of carbohydrates, fibre and contain many valuable vitamins and minerals - *so what's the problem?* Many arguments against grains cite the prevalence of grains in a variety of chronic disease states including diabetes, heart disease, autoimmune disease, cancer and obesity.

Grains were introduced to the human diet approximately 10,000 years ago. Prior to this our ancestors followed a hunter-gatherer way of living and eating. Over the past 200-300 years the introduction of modern agriculture and specifically milling, has made grains far more accessible to the world and has seen us consuming grain products several times daily. *Contrary to popular belief, ecologists claim that 10,000 years is not sufficient time for the human body to evolve and adapt to the consumption of grains.*

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Health experts worldwide, including the heart foundation and anticancer council have supported

the regular daily consumption of grains. Cereals and whole grains have maintained their status of 'health promoting foods' being highlighted in prime position on the good ol' healthy diet pyramid as "

*foods to consume most often"*

Given this impressive array of endorsement, it would be safe to assume that whole grains in fact promote good health and prevent disease? ... and our current society should be living proof of that? ...

Not surprisingly research indicates that *human health has declined* since the introduction of agricultural practices.

***In the last 130 years of increased grain consumption - chronic disease rates and the average weight of the population have increased whilst fertility has decreased.***

Grains contain various ingredients that can be harmful to our health. ***Phytic acid in grains can block the absorption of essential minerals including calcium, iron, magnesium, copper and zinc.***

Traditionally, grains were sprouted before consumption - this process not only reduced the phytic acid content but also increased the nutrient load of the grain.

Gluten, amongst other proteins found in grains can prove problematic for many. ***Gluten is often a major contributing factor in the development of food intolerances, allergies and autoimmune conditions***

When removed from the diet, symptoms generally improve dramatically.

Australia's obesity epidemic has also been correlated against grain consumption (in association with lifestyle factors etc) *When you consume carbohydrates, the body eventually turns them into glucose*. Glucose is of course a valuable fuel for your brain and muscle tissues. However any surplus of glucose that is not burnt as energy is converted to and stored as fat.

I am frequently asked about my stance on this matter. My reply varies based upon the individual circumstance and state of health. However in light of this article, I encourage each of my clients to be mindful of their grain consumption. It's fair to say that in our modern, high-speed society - the convenience of food items such as bread, pasta, rice, biscuits, cereals are used as 'fillers', often reducing our consumption of the more bioavailable, nutrient dense staples - vegetables and lean proteins. Food for thought:)

Please contact me if you have any further questions or concerns re this matter, wishing you the best of health, Josie [info@vitaturalhealth.com.au](mailto:info@vitaturalhealth.com.au) 9650 0734