What Makes a Grain Whole?

We have all heard to eat more whole grains, but why is this? The key is the composition of the grain. All grains have three main parts that vary in nutrient content:

**Bran**
The thin outside layer that protects the rest of the grain

**Germ**
A small part at the bottom of the grain that provides nourishment for the seed

**Endosperm**
The part of the grain that provides food and energy to the seed

When grains are “whole”, they contain all three of these parts and provide fiber, vitamins, and minerals. When the grain is refined (processed), the bran and germ are removed and the endosperm is all that is left. This process removes many nutrients. So, eat more of those whole grains to “reap” the full benefits!