Q & A FROM THE WHAT ABOUT WHAT, ANYWAY? WEBINAR

March 23, 2022

Questions answered by panel speakers Dr. Alison Duncan, Dr. Megan Racey and Daniel Guerrero.

Q. Why did the study presented show that whole grain cereal has a prebiotic effect, more so than wheat bran cereal, even though wheat bran has more fibre?

A. This is a great question. It may be related to other components in the whole grain cereal that contribute to the change in the gut bacteria, but the bottom line is that both of these cereals confirmed the prebiotic effect of wheat.

Our gut health research page discusses the fermentability of fibre, which might be another factor in this complex relationship for how high-fibre foods affect the bacteria of our gut.

This also relates to the discussion of long fermentation of wheat in products such as sourdough bread. There is a body of literature that supports these types of foods and their role in helping postprandial glucose response and thus favourably affecting diabetes management.

Link to the study
Links to learn more about gut health or wheat and diabetes

Q. What are the main nutritional components that are lost in the milling of refined flours from whole grain?

A: This may vary by country, but whole grain flours generally keep all three components of the kernel in the same proportion as they are naturally found.

In milling all-purpose or 'white' flour, mainly B vitamins are lost, which is why refined wheat flour is enriched with B vitamins among other nutrients.

Links to learn more about milling

Q. What is the relationship between gut health to heart health?

The key to this relationship is short chain fatty acids (SCFA). When fibre is fermented by the bacteria in our gut, SCFA are produced. These SCFA are absorbed by our intestines and impact metabolism in a way that supports heart health. For example, LDL Cholesterol and total cholesterol can be affected favourably by SCFA which promotes better heart health.

Link to learn more about wheat and heart health

Q. What drives the requirements for fortification of refined wheat flours across different countries?

A. Each country determines its' own program requirements for enrichment and fortification, based on shortfall nutrients found in the population.

Enrichment refers to replacing the nutrients lost during milling, like the B vitamins, whereas fortification is the addition of nutrients to achieve a positive public health outcome.

Link to learn more about enrichment & fortification

Q. How can we talk about gluten beyond the negative connotation that it is bad for our health?

A. Of course eating foods with gluten is not recommended for those with specific sensitivities or celiac disease. Research consistently shows that if you don't have these conditions, you are okay to continue eating foods that contain gluten. We cover this topic in greater detail on our website and also review the effects of removing gluten-containing foods.

Link to learn more about gluten

Q. There is a misconception that white pasta (as a refined wheat product) can be bad for those living with diabetes and should be removed from the diet. How can we address this based on the research mentioned?

A. There is a gap in understanding of how refined grains can fit in our diet. Gluten, found in refined grains, participates in the whole food pasta complex. It reduces the speed of digestion and makes pasta a low glycemic index food. There is an opportunity to share this research and empower consumers, clients, and patients to bring these questions to their health professionals and bridge this gap in knowledge.

link to the study
Link to learn more about wheat & diabetes

Q. Can I find whole grain whole wheat flour in stores?

A. Yes. In Canada, look for wheat flour labeled "whole grain whole wheat" on the bag. Keep in mind, different types of flours serve different purposes and the minor differences in nutritional value of these flour types (such as whole grain vs. whole wheat or all-purpose flour) are small in our overall diet.

Link to learn more about types of flours