



# Whole Grains Linked to a Reduced Risk of Liver Cancer

A study found that people who had the largest increase in whole grain lowered their liver cancer risk by nearly 40 percent.

March 1, 2019 By [Alicia Green](#)

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Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) is a primary form of liver cancer and the second leading cause of death from cancer globally. What's more, it's projected that HCC will be among the top three causes of cancer-related death in the United States by 2030. Now, a new [study](#) published in JAMA Oncology reveals that a high intake of whole grains can lower the risk of HCC among American adults, reports [CNBC](#).

To analyze the associations between whole grain and dietary fiber intake and HCC risk, scientists assessed more than 125,000 participants (77,241 women and 48,214 men) from two cohorts of the Nurses' Health Study and the Health Professionals Follow-Study. (The first study is one of the largest investigations into the risk factors for major chronic diseases in women; the latter study evaluates a series of hypotheses about men's health relating nutritional factors to the incidence of serious illnesses.)

The intake of whole grains, their subcomponents (bran and germs) and dietary fiber (cereal, fruits and vegetables) were collected and updated almost every four years using validated food frequency questionnaires.

Of the study's participants, 141 were identified to have HCC following an average follow-up of about 24 years. Researchers also determined that those who had the largest increase in whole grain intake reduced their risk of liver cancer by 37 percent compared with people who consumed only a minimal amount of these grains.

In addition, adhering to a diet rich in whole grain lessens the risk of obesity, diabetes and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, all considered to be predisposing factors for HCC.

Diets high in bran and germ decreased HCC risk by 30 percent and 11 percent, respectively. But an increased consumption of fruit and vegetable fiber was not associated with a lower risk of HCC.

"If our findings are confirmed, increasing whole grain consumption may serve as a possible strategy for prevention for primary HCC," said Xuehong Zhang, MD, ScD, associate epidemiologist

at Brigham & Women's Hospital in Boston and assistant professor at Harvard Medical School.

[Click here](#) to learn how exercise is tied to lower liver cancer risk.

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