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Health benefits of cereal fibre and whole grain products

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The consumption of whole grain products has clear health benefits compared to refined grain products using only the inner parts of the seed. Most of the components of the grain that promote health such as fiber, minerals, vitamins, phytoestrogens, etc., are found in the bran and the germ. Recent surveys have shown that the benefits of whole grains are not only associated with dietary fiber but also related to the presence of other biologically active compounds and synergistic effects between dietary fiber and various trace elements. Eating whole grain products is an integral part of the recommended daily diet in many Western countries and the need to promote whole grain consumption has been recognized as one of the objectives of nutrition education and health promotion campaigns. The European Agency for Food Safety (EFSA) has approved health claims associated with diets containing dietary fiber intakes greater than 25 g per day, resulting in a reduced risk of coronary heart disease and type 2 diabetes and improved management of body weight. Specifically for oat and barley β -glucans, in the case of daily intake of 3 g, there is approved claim for reducing blood cholesterol levels applicable for foods that provide at least 1 g beta-glucan per serving.

Key words: cereal, fiber, phytochemicals, health claims

Biography

Maria Papageorgiou is a chemist with a Ph.D. in Food Biopolymers from Cranfield University, UK. She teaches "Cereal Chemistry and Technology", "Nutrition and nutritive value of Foods", "Food Legislation" at the Department of Food Technology, ATEI of Thessaloniki (ATEITH). Her current research interests involve the tailoring of functional and chemical properties of cereal and alternative plant sources in view of developing specific healthy foods and ingredients. She has an international profile having served as Board Member in of the European Section of the American Association of Cereal Chemists (AACC) and "ISEKI-FOOD" European Association for Integrating Food Science and Engineering Knowledge into the Food Chain (2005-2014) and also as National Delegate (2002-2012) at the International Association of Cereal Chemists (ICC). Her research work has been acknowledged by the international research community with more than 600 citations. Member of the Healthgrain Forum (www.healthgrain.org/).

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