

NUTRITION



F A C T S H E E T

Barley: A Healthy Heart Solution

Barley isn't just for soup anymore. This grain makes an excellent choice as the starring ingredient in main courses, side dishes, breakfast fare and more. In addition to its versatility, barley is a nutritious food that's high in fiber and low in fat. It's no wonder this centuries-old grain is enjoying new-found interest among connoisseurs of good food and good health.

Barley Helps Fight Heart Disease

Eating barley as part of a healthy diet may help reduce the risk of heart disease by lowering cholesterol. Barley is a rich source of fiber including both soluble and insoluble fiber. Researchers have identified a type of soluble fiber, beta-glucan, as the primary component in barley that is responsible for lowering cholesterol. Clinical studies show that eating whole grain barley or dry milled barley products such as pearl barley, barley flakes and barley flour that provide at least 3 grams of beta-glucan soluble fiber per day is effective in lowering total and LDL cholesterol. Studies also show that increasing daily consumption of this soluble fiber results in even greater total and LDL cholesterol reduction. One-fourth cup uncooked pearl barley (about 1 cup cooked) contains approximately 2.5 grams beta-glucan soluble fiber. One-half cup uncooked barley flakes contains approximately 2 grams beta-glucan soluble fiber. NOTE: These figures are averages only. Be sure to check package labels for soluble fiber content of specific barley products.

FDA Authorizes Barley Health Claim

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) confirms that including barley in a healthy diet may reduce the risk of heart disease by lowering total and LDL cholesterol. After reviewing

scientific evidence, FDA finalized a rule allowing the labels of foods containing barley to carry a health claim specific to soluble fiber and coronary heart disease. Qualifying products may bear the following claim:

“Soluble fiber from foods such as [name of food], as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease. A serving of [name of food] supplies [x] grams of the soluble fiber necessary per day to have this effect.”

Benefits Beyond Cholesterol Reduction

As a source of both soluble and insoluble fiber, barley offers additional health benefits beyond cholesterol reduction. For example, soluble fiber helps maintain blood sugar levels which may be beneficial in preventing or managing type 2 diabetes. Insoluble fiber helps promote regularity and protect against constipation. Also, eating fiber-rich foods may help increase satiety or a feeling of fullness. This is important for maintaining a healthy weight and protecting against obesity.

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Fiber Through and Through

When it comes to adding fiber to the diet, barley is an excellent choice. That's because both types of fiber—soluble and insoluble—are found throughout the entire barley kernel and not just in the outer bran layer. Even though the outer bran layer may be removed in processed barley products such as pearl barley, barley flakes or barley flour, the fiber content remains high. All forms of barley contain soluble and insoluble fiber and provide important health-promoting benefits.

Product Availability

- Pearl barley is readily available in most supermarkets and may be found next to dry beans, rice and lentils. Some supermarkets may also carry quick cooking barley. These kernels have been steamed and dried prior to packaging and require less cooking time.
- Barley flakes are made from barley kernels that have been steamed-rolled and dried. Barley flakes may be cooked as a hot cereal or used as an ingredient in baked goods. They may be found in the bulk foods sections of some supermarkets.
- Barley flour may be found in some supermarkets with other packaged flour products or in bulk containers. Barley flour may be used to add fiber to baked goods.
- Barley is also used as an ingredient in commercially prepared foods such as ready-to-eat cereals, hot cereals, cereal bars, canned soups and pilaf mixes.

BARLEY ORANGE PILAF

- 1 cup pearl barley
- 3 cups water
- ½ cup chopped pitted dates
- ½ cup chopped dried apricots
- 3 tablespoons orange marmalade
- ¾ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ cup slivered and toasted almonds

In medium saucepan with lid bring water to a boil. Add barley and return to boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook 45 minutes or until barley is tender and liquid is absorbed. Set aside. Spray large skillet with non-stick cooking spray; add dates, apricots and marmalade. Cook over medium heat, stirring, for 3 minutes. Blend in cumin, salt and pepper. Cook 2 minutes longer. Stir in cooked barley and almonds. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook until warmed through.

Makes 4 servings.

Per serving: calories 436, protein 10g, carbohydrates 82g, fiber 13g (including 2.5g beta-glucan soluble fiber), fat 10g, cholesterol 0, sodium 306mg.

In the Kitchen with Barley

- Cook up a batch of pearl barley and add to prepared soups, stews, casseroles and salads for an extra shot of flavor, texture and fiber.
- For a heart-healthy change of pace, serve your favorite stir-fry, stroganoff or curry over a bed of steaming hot pearl barley.

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