



Choose Barley for Healthy Hearts

SPOKANE, Wash. (February 2010) – According to statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heart disease continues to be the leading cause of death in the United States and is also a major cause of disability. But the good news is improving heart health can be as easy as making simple lifestyle changes like choosing foods with proven heart health-promoting attributes.

“Because February is American Heart Month, it’s a great time to remind consumers that barley is one very heart-smart grain,” says Mary Sullivan, executive director of the [National Barley Foods Council](#).

Barley is a rich source of beta-glucan, a type of soluble fiber. Published clinical studies confirm that eating barley beta-glucan soluble fiber lowers total and LDL cholesterol and reduces the risk for coronary heart disease. Studies also show that eating barley beta-glucan soluble fiber helps manage high blood pressure, another risk factor for heart disease.

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) agree that including barley in a healthy diet may reduce the risk for heart disease. “In fact the FDA published a [final ruling](#) in 2006 authorizing a health claim for barley soluble fiber and coronary heart disease,” notes Sullivan.

In addition to its high fiber content, barley is cholesterol-free and low in fat. It also contains antioxidants and important vitamins and minerals such as niacin, thiamin, selenium, iron, magnesium, zinc, phosphorus and copper.

Barley is available in several forms including pearl barley, whole grain kernels, rolled flakes, grits and flour. Here are some easy ways to give family favorites a healthful fiber boost with this heart-smart grain:

- ♥ Add cooked whole grain or pearl barley kernels to soups, stews, casseroles and stir-frys for extra flavor and heart-healthy fiber.
- ♥ Serve cooked barley flakes or grits for a hot and hardy breakfast entrée.

♥ Too busy to cook? Look for prepared foods that contain heart-healthy barley as a primary ingredient such as ready-to-eat cereals, heat-and-eat multigrain entrees, multigrain snack bars and crackers.

For more information about barley including health benefits, recipes and cooking tips, visit www.barleyfoods.org.

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