

Make nice with rice to boost your diet

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(HealthDay)—If you love rice, you might be wondering how you can make it part of healthy meals. Whether you're trying to drop pounds or stay at a healthy weight, some adjustments will let you keep it on the

menu.

Rice belongs to the grain family. While [grains](#) are an important part of your overall diet, standard [white rice](#) isn't a nutritious choice—it's not a [whole grain](#). What's more, it's a food that has 200 calories per cup, so you want to make sure that you maximize nutrients as well as flavor.

First, opt for [brown rice](#), the whole-grain form, as often as possible. White rice has gone through a process that removes its fiber and many of its nutrients, including protein, iron and some B vitamins.

There are many types—and colors—of whole grain rice to sample, including brown basmati, red rice, purple Thai and Chinese black rice. Popular Wehani rice is a whole grain, reddish-brown American hybrid of basmati and brown rices. Note that [wild rice](#) is another tasty choice, though technically it's not a rice, but rather a semi-aquatic grass. It makes a great medley when mixed with brown rice.

Also experiment with different ways to turn rice into a meal rather than a side dish. For lunch or a cold supper, load a whole-wheat pita pocket with cooked and cooled rice and chopped vegetables and top with a light vinaigrette.

Or try a cold rice salad for a to-go meal. For your protein, add in chunks of turkey, chicken, tofu or nuts, then blend in a handful of dried raisins or cranberries and a sprinkling of seasonings.

You can even get creative and make homemade sushi rolls at home. Use avocado and cucumber if you're not a fan of raw fish.

Baked with milk, eggs, vanilla, a small amount of sweetener and cinnamon, brown rice can even make a healthy version of [rice](#) pudding for dessert or even breakfast.

More information: The Whole Grains Council has more on all types of [rice](#) to help you enjoy the healthiest varieties.

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