

Oatstanding Oats!

One of the barriers to eating well can be limited time to prepare meals and snacks. Believe it or not, oatmeal, is ready to solve our *no-time-for-breakfast* dilemma. First, let's talk nutrition benefits. Scientific evidence shows that eating more plant-based foods — whole grains, vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds and beans — plays a role in preventing cancer and keeping us healthy overall. That's because plant-based foods are higher in types of fiber and nutrients that may help prevent cancer. Oatmeal, no matter the form, is a whole grain. That is right, you get to choose the texture you like and keep all the nutrition benefits. How well do you know your oats? Read on to note the differences between each form and how to prepare them. Try out the recipe, *Apple Blueberry Baked Oatmeal*, this week for a great make-ahead meal.

Rolled oats: These oats have been steamed, pressed with a roller, and then dried. They also go by the name old-fashioned oats. Prepare by mixing 1 cup of dry rolled oats with 2 cups of water or milk and simmer for five minutes. This makes two cups.

Steel-cut oats: These are unrolled oats that have been cut into two or three pieces. They have a chewy texture. To cook steel-cut oats, combine 1 cup of the dry oats with 4 cups of water or milk and simmer for 20 minutes. This makes two cups.

Quick-cooking oats: These are rolled oats that have been cut into smaller pieces than the steel-cut variety and rolled thinner. This processing means they cook quickly. To prepare, combine 1 cup of dry quick-cooking oats with 2 cups of water or milk. Simmer for one minute and let stand for three to five minutes. This makes two cups.

Instant oatmeal: These are oats that are precooked and dried. You find these usually in individual serving packets. This form can be directly mixed with hot water to make a smooth, creamy-textured cereal. No further cooking is required.

Apple Blueberry Baked Oatmeal

This make-ahead recipe, featuring nutrient dense ingredients like milk, oats, apples and blueberries, is handy to heat up for a quick breakfast or snack. Protein from the milk and fiber from the oats and apples are sure to help keep you satisfied and fueled all morning long. Serve with fruit, a scrambled or hardboiled egg and a small glass of milk for a satisfying meal.

1½ cups fat-free or 1% milk

½ cup packed brown sugar

2 eggs

1 tablespoon butter, melted

½ teaspoon cinnamon

2 cups rolled oats (not instant)

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 chopped apple, leave the skin on if you like

½ cup frozen wild blueberries (you can use regular if you can't find wild)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a small bowl mix the milk, brown sugar, eggs, butter and cinnamon.
3. In a larger bowl combine the oats and the baking powder.
4. Pour the wet mixture into the bowl with the oats; add the chopped apple and blueberries; stir to combine.
5. Spoon the mixture into an 8-by-8-inch pan coated with cooking spray and bake for 30 to 40 minutes, until top is firm, and a toothpick comes out clean in the center.

Serving size: 1 piece; Serves 8

Calories: 187; Total fat: 4g; Total Carbohydrate: 33g; Dietary Fiber: 3g; Protein 6g; Sodium: 120mg.

Source: Hall Perrine Cancer Center Dietitians