

Brown Rice, Friend or Foe

Anthony M. Antonacci NMD, CSCS, DC, FASBE

Many myths persist surrounding certain foods being “health foods” that will enhance your wellbeing. Do you remember when margarine was considered healthy? Brown Rice could be considered one of those mythical foods that have questionable health enhancing benefits.

Consider White Basmati Rice over Brown Rice, not because of the glycemic index or fiber content or nutrient content, but because it does not contain the Anti-Nutrients that Brown Rice contains. So, let’s provide several facts regarding Brown Rice and then follow with the benefits of Basmati Rice.

Brown Rice has a high amount of phytic acid, which binds minerals making them unable to be absorbed because we lack the enzyme to break down phytates. That means that all the micronutrients that brown rice has will simply pass through the digestive tract and never have a chance to be absorbed. More importantly you will deplete your body of minerals, which are critical for vitamin assimilation, among many other processes in the body, particularly magnesium and potassium. A point of critical thought for all the osteoporotic women that are vegans eating brown rice, daily, as you rob your bones of calcium. If you do not absorb minerals such as calcium from your food, your body will rob it from itself and that is what you are unknowingly doing making your condition worse.

In the book, Cure Tooth Decay, Ramiel Nagel addresses the aforementioned devastating effects of phytic acid in the diet. He maintains the traditional method for preparing brown rice is never to eat it whole (with only the husk removed), but rather to pound it in a mortar and pestle in order to remove the bran layer which contains the primary source of phytic acid. No restaurant or you will take the time to do that. Even soaking overnight and then steaming the brown rice will remove very little of all the aforementioned anti-nutrients.

Brown Rice has trypsin inhibitors. Trypsin is one of the most important protein digesting enzymes in humans. That means without it, or inhibited, you will not digest protein, or only partially digest it. What that means is, if you are eating that \$25 a pound grass fed sirloin with your brown rice, you will not absorb the proteins in that steak as they will never have a chance to be broken down into amino acids, which your body needs for a host of metabolic processes.

Brown Rice has haemagglutinin-lectin that binds to carbohydrate receptor sites in the small intestine and can impede nutrient absorption. Basically, it is the equivalent of gluten in rice.

For 30 years I have been cautioning patients about high fiber diets from non-sprouted grains, as I have seen and continue to see the detrimental effects in the gut and the resultant leaky gut or dysbiosis. We also see the inability to digest these grains, in the blood. Here is the good news; we are starting to see many doctors writing books, being vocal and denouncing grains.

Konstantin Monsastyrsky eloquently illustrates my clinical findings in his book, Fiber Menace wherein he shows the leading role high fiber diets from grain, not fruits and vegetables, play in related gut ailments including colon cancer. Which, by the way, is on the rise as well as Crohn's disease, leaky gut and ulcerative colitis. Unsuspecting folks that have been told to eat high fiber grain diets from their doctors are actually ripping their guts to shreds. Literally. And that is why most folks that consume brown rice complain that it sits like a brick in their stomachs. Even though it may not be politically correct or in line with what everyone else is doing, it might be a rational thought to never force feed yourself what doesn't intuitively seem to be something your body wants. Brown Rice is difficult to digest, at best, rendering it a questionable health building food.

A recent study presented at the recent meeting of The American Association for Cancer Research in San Diego, CA showed that a high fiber diet without proper and adequate gut microbiomes or butyrate producing bacteria did not protect against colon cancer. The study was by performed by Dr. Scott Bultman an assistant professor at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine. The fiber from Brown Rice and most other grains is dead and will not foster the propagation of gut bacteria. In fact, grains such as Brown Rice will interfere with it. Fiber sources should be from raw, organic vegetables, fruits and sprouted grains.

In India, Basmati rice is considered the foundation of all nourishment. It is given to both the healthy and ill as it is easily assimilated into our bodily tissues. While many health conscious westerners value brown rice for its high bran (phytic acid) and fiber content, Ayurveda Medicine embraces fragrant and aromatic Basmati Rice because it is lighter and significantly lighter to digest. Basmati Rice is Sattvic (pure) and balances the three doshas: pitta, vata and kapha.

Basmati Rice builds body tissue and is very high in Prana (vital life energy). Basmati rice fills many roles in Ayurvedic nutrition. Its Rasa or quality of taste is sweet and offers a deep satisfaction, unlike brown rice that tastes like old cardboard. As the body easily digests Basmati rice, its Virya (energetic impact on the digestive fire) is cooling. Finally, its Vipaka (post digestion effect) is also sweet and provides, yet, another level of satisfaction and comfort. The finest Basmati Rice is from the Himalaya Mountains. Consider Jasmine Rice, as well and, of course, most sprouted grains which are alive and do not convey the actual toxic effects of Brown Rice.