

Is Brown Rice Really Healthy?

By Avantika Bose

We all have that one health-conscious friend who would want to order brown rice instead of white or we've all read an article somewhere or a WhatsApp forward that talks about the health benefits of brown rice over white.

Nutritionists say that you should avoid white foods because they affect your health and especially if you overeat them.

For some reason white foods - be it potatoes, pasta or white bread have been banned by the Kim Kardashians of the world. The logic behind this is that the brown version of foods are less processed and hence contain more fibre, nutrients and have lower GI (glycemic index).

But in case of rice it isn't that simple!

The diet of a typical Japanese person is filled with lots and lots of white rice and yet most of them happen to live healthy lives, don't they? Also, there are rumours that brown rice contains compounds that prevent our bodies from absorbing nutrients and it even contains arsenic, a naturally occurring mineral which can be poisonous and even fatal in large doses.

Which means that white rice might not be as bad as it's portrayed to be and brown rice might not be as healthy!

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Now the real question is how to choose between brown rice and white rice — the answer to which is quite simple really. It all comes down to looking at the components of each, and how our bodies absorb and use the nutrients and sugars found in them.

According to the various studies done, brown rice has 218 calories in one cup as compared to the 242 calories that white rice has. Brown rice also has more fibres and lesser carbs and as far as the protein and fat is concerned it's equal in both.

Overall, brown rice has a nutty flavour, contains whole grains, takes 45 minutes to cook and is loaded with nutrients. On the other hand, white rice has a mild, sweet taste, most whole grains stripped, takes 15 minutes to cook and many nutrients are stripped during refinement process.

Which is the more healthy option you ask? Brown rice does come out to be a winner in many aspects, but at the end of the day much of it is minimal. For instance, *if a healthy diet is a part of your daily regime then, even if you eat white rice it won't have any negative effects on your health. And likewise if you follow an unhealthy diet then eating brown rice won't help you either.*

The bottom line is that no food can be labelled as good or bad. Both brown and white rice can be consumed in moderation as a part of a balanced diet. ■

