



Press release

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## **Only 5% of Finnish youth consume enough whole grains – Fazer makes it easier to increase whole grain intake through product development**

**Finnish youth are not getting nearly enough whole grain in their diets. According to a new study<sup>1)</sup>, 15–17-year-olds consume on average only about half of the recommended amount of whole grain, which reduces the intake of essential nutrients – such as dietary fibre and folate. Experts emphasise that whole grain bread and healthy breakfasts and snacks support young people’s energy levels and overall nutrition.**

Young people in Finland are far from meeting whole grain intake recommendations. A recent (2026) study<sup>1)</sup> by the University of Eastern Finland found that Finnish youth, aged 15–17, consume on average only about 53 grams of whole grains per day. The recommended intake for adults is at least 90 grams per day – and only around 5% of young people reach this level. The study confirms that the young people’s consumption of whole grains is clearly below recommended levels and increases the risk of deficiencies in key nutrients. Insufficient whole grain intake means that, in addition to fibre and folate, the intake of nutrients such as iron, zinc and magnesium also falls below recommended levels for many young people.

Whole grains improve overall diet quality. Whole grains are rich in dietary fibre and B vitamins – especially folate – as well as many important minerals. Even a small increase in whole grain intake quickly boosts fibre and folate intake among young people. Fibre, for example, promotes gut health, while folate is needed for normal immune system function and to help reduce tiredness and fatigue<sup>2)</sup>. Extensive research has shown that children and youth who consume more whole grains have a better overall diet quality than those who eat little or none.

### **Breakfasts and snacks matter**

Breakfast and snacks support daily energy levels. As many as half of young people start the day without eating breakfast, and when hungry they often reach for sweets or, for example, white bread<sup>3)</sup>. Therefore, it is important for young people to eat breakfast and proper snacks regularly to meet their daily energy and nutrient needs. Whole grain bread as well as whole grain cereals, porridges and granola are excellent components of a healthy breakfast or snack.

“A model based on whole grain bread and cereals can encourage young people to put together a simple and tasty breakfast or a snack that supports growth and provides energy for the day. When whole grain bread is topped with a low-fat protein source, a spread containing good-quality fats and vegetables, the result is a balanced meal. Whole grain cereals, granola or porridge complemented with a protein source, nuts



and berries or fruit are easy to prepare even when in a hurry,” says **Marika Laaksonen**, Lead in Health, Senior Manager in Nutrition at Fazer.

### **Fazer invests in whole grain products**

“The type of grain doesn’t matter when it comes to whole grains – in addition to the much-loved Finnish rye bread, for example oat bread or wheat toast can also be whole grain. To support Finns in achieving whole grain intake targets, Fazer Bakery Finland has committed to ensuring that by 2030, 65% of our sales volume consists of whole grain breads. Currently, over 57% of our bread range in Finland already consists of whole grain products. The amount of whole grain is clearly indicated on our product packaging,” Laaksonen explains.

“In product development at both Fazer Bakery and Fazer Mill, we focus on promoting the use of whole grains and supporting good everyday choices. All Fazer Alku products are made mainly from whole grain ingredients, and we continuously develop new solutions that make it easier to increase whole grain intake, especially among young people. Our goal is for whole grains to be a natural part of every breakfast and snack,” Laaksonen adds.

Young people have both the desire and the need to eat more whole grain, but in busy everyday life the challenge often lies in the “how”, which is reflected in eating habits. It is therefore worth offering easier solutions, such as ready-filled whole grain sandwiches, whole grain overnight oats or other high-fibre products. Every gram of whole grain is beneficial, and even a single extra handful of whole grain cereal or bread is a step towards better nutrition for Finnish youth.

#### **Sources:**

- 1) [Tuomi, Tilda A.: Nuorten täysjyväviljan käyttö ja sen yhteys ravintoaineiden saantiin, aivojen rakenteeseen sekä kognitiiviseen suoriutumiseen Pro gradu –tutkielma, Ravitsemustiede, Itä-Suomen yliopisto 2026](https://erepo.uef.fi/server/api/core/bitstreams/ab5c9afb-face-4c1f-87b1-7e0de6f59999/content) <https://erepo.uef.fi/server/api/core/bitstreams/ab5c9afb-face-4c1f-87b1-7e0de6f59999/content>
- 2) EFSA-approved health claims: Folate contributes to the normal functioning of the immune system and helps reduce tiredness and fatigue. Rye fibre promotes normal bowel function. As part of a varied and balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle.
- 3) [Väisänen M ym.: Nuorten ravitsemusseurannan esitutkimus, Terveiden ja Hyvinvoinnin laitos Työpaperi 33/2023](https://www.julkari.fi/server/api/core/bitstreams/596c4f5f-dc37-4f00-b7ac-72b87cbda2d0/content) <https://www.julkari.fi/server/api/core/bitstreams/596c4f5f-dc37-4f00-b7ac-72b87cbda2d0/content>

#### **Further information:**

Fazer’s media desk serves Mon–Fri 8 am–4 pm, tel. +358 40 668 2998, [media@fazer.com](mailto:media@fazer.com)

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