

## THOUGHTS ON HEALTHFUL EATING



### By, Aaron Anker, Grandy Oats

*In the late '90s, Aaron Anker moved to Maine after working in corporate restaurant management, and began selling for the fresh juice company that later became Odwalla. He later joined an old college friend, Nat Peirce, in Grandy Oats, in Bridgton. Today, the company is growing, producing over 40 100 percent organic products across the U.S. Aaron shares his thoughts on healthful eating.*

Studies have shown that starting your day with a nutritious bite to eat not only increases your metabolism, but energizes your mind and body in ways that a quick cup of coffee will never touch. Fruit, whole grains such as oats, nuts, eggs, yogurt, butter and natural sweeteners such as honey all provide nutrients to begin your day in the right way.

For example, oatmeal and oat bran are significant sources of dietary fiber, which contains a mixture of soluble and insoluble fibers. One component of the soluble fiber found in oats is beta-glucans, which has proven effective in lowering blood cholesterol. Eating oats can also spread the rise in blood sugars over a longer time period. This control of blood glucose and insulin levels helps to prevent complications associated with diabetes. Another perk about oats is that they contain hundreds of phytochemicals (plant chemicals) which have been thought to reduce the risk of cancer. Two recent Scandinavian studies discovered that adding oats to a gluten-free diet may, “enhance the nutritional values of the diets, particularly for vitamins and minerals, as well as increasing antioxidant levels.” Furthermore, researchers have found that during comparisons studies of eating oat cereal and a lower-fiber cereal, the oat group enjoyed a 7.5mm Hg reduction in systolic blood pressure

One way to get your whole grains, fruit and protein is by enjoying a bowl of granola. GrandyOats based in Brownfield, Maine, makes a sugar-free, organic granola that is a good source of fiber and protein. Furthermore, eating granola supports a sustainable business based in a rural location. Although 11 flavors are available, one uniquely Maine options is Mainely Maple, a mixture of hazelnuts, sunflower seeds and

maple syrup, and others include Classic granola which is sweetened with honey and packed with nuts and seeds, and Cranberry Chew, a low-fat flavor without oil and nuts, sweetened with orange juice and honey.

For those concerned about the number of miles their food travels, localvores can now rejoice not only when they make their eggs and bacon from the farm down the road, but when they open package of locally made granola options. Sourcing Maine-grown oats has been on the “menu” of things to do for years. While the oat supply isn’t quite enough yet to supply all the granola, the company works with a mill in Skowhegan and sells the oats to several large cooperatives in New England. As consumer demand and the size of the mill increase, there will be more room for oat farmers in Maine. Hopefully in the future, more purveyors can source more oats from closer to home.

While there is an overwhelming amount of “natural” cereals to choose from in the grocery aisle, a recent Cornucopia Institute report revealed that organic and so-called natural products contain vast differences. A natural granola can contain ingredients grown on conventional farms that use toxic pesticides and genetically engineered organisms. In addition, their analysis showed that the natural products are often priced higher than equivalent organic products, which suggests some companies are taking advantage of consumer confusion. The full study can be read here: ([www.cornucopia.org/2011/10/natural-vs-organic-cereal/](http://www.cornucopia.org/2011/10/natural-vs-organic-cereal/)). Start tomorrow and every morning on the right foot by eating a variety of fruit, nuts and whole grains in addition to exercise and time outdoors!

**For more information on Grandy Oats, visit [www.grandyoats.com](http://www.grandyoats.com)**