



GLYCEMIC INDEX
making healthy choices easy

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POSITION STATEMENT

ADDED SUGARS AND THE GI SYMBOL PROGRAM

The GI Symbol Program includes category specific [nutrient criteria](#) that incorporate energy (kilojoules), total carbohydrate, total and saturated fat, sodium, dietary fibre and calcium requirements. The energy and carbohydrate caps and dietary fibre requirements limit the amount of sugars that can be added to foods that carry the GI Symbol

The Glycemic Index (or GI) is simply a measure of how quickly a carbohydrate food raises blood glucose levels. Carbohydrates (both sugars and starches) are the most important source of energy for our bodies. Low GI carbohydrates – those that are slowly digested, absorbed and metabolised – cause a much lower and slower rise in blood glucose and insulin levels, helping us to burn more fat and avoid weight gain over the longer term.

It is a common mis-understanding that all sugars have a high GI and all starches have a low GI. In fact, many sugar-containing foods also have a low GI. Examples include most fresh, dried and canned fruits, milk, flavoured milk drinks and yoghurts. Many starchy foods have a high GI including white flour and white flour breads, potatoes, Jasmine rice, rice crackers, and many breakfast cereals (puffed rice, flaked corn and wheat).

Whilst excessive energy (kilojoule) intake (>10% of energy) from foods and drinks that are high in added sugars should be avoided, consumers should consider more than sugar content alone when making food choices. It is important to consider the total amount of carbohydrate and its GI rating and the overall nutritional quality of a food including the amount of kilojoules, fat, saturated fat, salt and fibre for long term health outcomes.

SUGARS and GI

The glycemic index (GI) of sugars ranges fivefold from a low of 19 for fructose to a high of 105 for maltose (see table 1 for details).

Table 1: GI of sugars

Maltose GI= 105
Glucose/dextrose GI=100
Rice syrup GI=98
Sucrose GI=65
Lactose GI=46
Fructose GI=19

As can be seen, sucrose has a medium GI, so addition of large amounts will raise (not lower) the GI of most foods and beverages.



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ADDED SWEETENERS IN AUSTRALIAN FOODS

In Australia, the most common sugar added to foods and drinks is sucrose (otherwise known as cane sugar). Fructose is very rarely added to foods in Australia due to its high cost, overly sweet taste (1.7 times sweeter than cane sugar) and the fact that large amounts consumed by itself will cause malabsorption (bloating, gas, pain, nausea, diarrhoea, etc...).

Added sugars consumption decreased between 1995 and 2011/2.

FRUCTOSE

As the GI value indicates, 19% of pure fructose consumed in a 50 g dose is directly converted into glucose in the liver and released into the blood stream over a 2 hour period. The remainder is stored as glycogen (a form of starch) in the liver for later use, or released into the blood stream as pyruvate, lactate or triglycerides. Unlike rodents, very little fructose is converted to fat in humans.

THE GLYCEMIC INDEX FOUNDATION:

The Glycemic Index Foundation (GIF) is a not-for-profit organisation established in 2001 by the University of Sydney, Diabetes Australia and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

GIF administers the Glycemic Index (GI) Tested certification trademark, or 'GI Symbol Program'. Foods that carry the authentic GI symbol meet strict nutrient criteria for energy (kilojoules), saturated fat, and, where appropriate, dietary fibre, calcium and sodium. They have also had their glycemic index tested at an accredited laboratory.

Funds surplus to the GI Symbol Program are directed to community awareness and education about the health benefits of low GI carbohydrate choices, in research and development to make lower GI choices available in each food category and in ongoing scientific research to build knowledge and understanding of the health benefits of low GI carbohydrates.

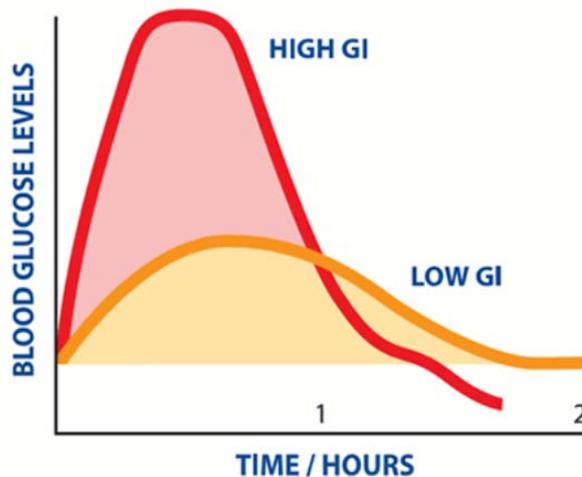
WHAT IS GLYCEMIC INDEX?

The glycemic index (GI) is a ranking of carbohydrates in foods on a scale from 0 to 100 according to the extent to which they raise blood glucose levels. Foods with a high GI (70 or more) are those which cause our blood glucose levels to go higher for longer, which can damage vital tissues and organs if high blood glucose levels persist over a period of time.



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Source: www.glycemicindex.com

Low GI foods (55 or less), by virtue of their slow digestion, absorption and/or metabolism, produce a less pronounced rise in blood glucose and insulin levels, and have proven benefits for health. Low GI diets have been shown to reduce blood glucose levels in people with diabetes (type 1 and type 2). They also have benefits for weight management.

Research has shown that Australians eat too many high GI carbohydrates and not enough low GI carbohydrates.

Glycemic Index Foundation recommends that added sugars only be consumed in moderation (i.e., less than 10% of energy) as recommended by the World Health Organisation and as part of a balanced diet and active lifestyle.

For further information, visit: www.glycemicindex.com or www.gisymbol.com