

GLYCEMIC INDEX: All you need to know

making healthy choices easy



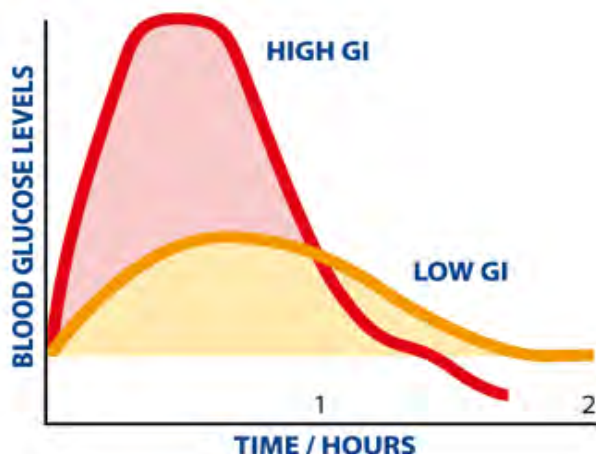
What is the Glycemic Index?

The Glycemic Index (GI) is the scientifically proven way of ranking carbohydrates, like breads, breakfast cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, fruit, starchy vegetables, legumes, milk and yoghurt according to how they affect your blood glucose (sugar) levels.

Most people don't eat too much carbohydrate. In fact, most people just eat the wrong kind of carbohydrate. And that's where GI comes in.

Not all carbohydrates are created equal

Carbohydrates with a low GI (55 or less) will make your blood glucose rise slowly and fall gently over a longer time. Carbohydrates with a high GI (70 or more) are digested and absorbed quickly causing your blood glucose levels to spike and then crash.



Research has shown that we eat too many high GI foods and not enough low GI foods. The bottom line is that the average GI of our diet is often too high, putting us at risk of developing significant health problems.

Why is the GI of foods important?

The scientific evidence supporting the health benefits of a healthy low GI diet is overwhelming.

In Australia, more than 2 out of 3 men, 1 in 2 women, and 1 in 4 children are overweight or obese.

Lowering the GI of your diet will help prevent and manage overweight and obesity, which are the major underlying causes of diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.

How can the GI benefit me? It's all about balance.

In order to achieve any of these health benefits, it is important that low GI carbohydrates are a significant part of a healthy balanced diet.

This means swapping high GI foods for low GI choices in the same food group or category at main meals and for snacks.

The foods you choose should also be lower in saturated fat, moderate in sodium and higher in fibre. Serve size is also important, as eating too much of any kind of food, even healthy choices, may make you put on weight.

Eat slowly and enjoy your food. Think before you eat. Only eat when you are hungry, not stressed, upset or bored.

Also, include in your daily routine 30 minutes of planned exercise like walking, swimming, or riding a bike, plus 30 minutes of "incidental" activity like using the stairs instead of the lift.

What if I have diabetes?

Healthy eating is important for everyone, including people living with diabetes. Enjoying healthy foods and being active will help manage your blood glucose levels (BGLs) and your body weight. In fact healthy eating for people with diabetes is similar to recommendations for everyone. There is no need to prepare separate meals or buy special foods

Studies around the world show that following a low GI diet significantly helps people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes improve their BGLs.

How do you achieve a low GI diet?

Lowering the GI of the diet is simply a matter of swapping high GI carbs for those that have a low GI.

Minimise high GI		Maximise lower GI alternatives
Breads	Soft white breads.	Authentic sourdough.
	Light & airy wholemeal & white breads.	Dense, wholegrain/multigrain low GI & pumpernickel.
Cereals	Most refined, commercial, processed cereals.	Traditional grains like rolled oats, pearl barley, quinoa & cereals made from them like natural muesli.
Main meal carbs and starchy foods	Potatoes: mashed, chips and French fries.	Carisma™ potatoes, sweet potato, parsnip, corn, lentils, chickpeas, kidney, cannellini bean, baked beans.
	Jasmine, calrose, arborio, glutinous, short grain, brown or white rice.	Basmati, low GI white or brown rice e.g. Doongara, prepared sushi made from traditional Japanese rice.
	Polenta, millet.	Pasta cooked 'al dente', soba noodles, pearl couscous, buckwheat, quinoa, pearl barley.
Snacks	Water crackers, crispbread, doughnuts, confectionary, processed fruit bars, pretzels, rice cakes and crackers.	Fresh fruit such as apples, pears, bananas, grapes, kiwi fruit; wholegrain crackers; dried fruit and nuts; low fat yoghurt; muesli bars; nut, seed & grain bars.
Sweeteners	Sugar, golden syrup, treacle.	Pure maple syrup, LoGICane™ sugar, pure floral honey.
Beverages	Cordials, soft drinks.	Water, fruit juices (limit to 150ml) reduced or low fat milk or soy drink.



Glycemic Index Foundation

26 Arundel Street
Glebe, NSW 2037 Australia
www.gifoundation.org.au

Email: info@gifoundation.org.au

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What about Glycemic Load?

Glycemic Load or GL is a measure of both the quality and quantity of a carbohydrate in a food or drink. GI is the measure of quality. Therefore the best way to watch your Glycemic Load is to choose foods with the lowest GI within a food group or category, and to be mindful of your serve size.

Food Symbols can provide a quick way to help overcome confusion and the overwhelming amount of choice in the supermarket.

The GI Symbol makes healthier choices easier

While most of us know that our health and wellbeing will improve if we eat more nutritious foods, the reality is that a lack of time and busy lifestyles often contribute to poor food choices. Unfortunately, poor food choices are a major cause of obesity, type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Reading and interpreting nutrition information on foods is a complex task, and who has the time to study and compare the thousands of foods that are found in a typical supermarket?

That's where the GI Symbol comes in ...

The GI Symbol is a public health initiative based on over 30 years of scientific research. It is your trusted guide to healthier food choices. Foods that carry the certified Low GI symbol meet strict nutrient criteria for kilojoules, saturated fat and sodium. In addition, they have had their glycemic index tested at an accredited laboratory.

