The perfect way to get started on low GI healthy eating is in the supermarket. This is where we tend to make impulsive decisions that have a big impact. If your kitchen contains foods that may compromise your health, a few easy swaps and planning ahead can make a huge difference.

Let’s start with the pantry and fridge.

## Pantry Top 10

### 1. Canned legumes, such as chickpeas, lentils, kidney & cannellini beans
- Full of fibre and packed with protein. Add to soups, pasta sauces, curries and salads for low GI inspiration.
- Blend chickpeas or cannellini beans with lemon juice and garlic for a quick and easy hummus.

### 2. Dried pasta, plain noodles, pearl couscous, rice and quinoa
- Pasta cooked ‘al-dente’ is a quick and easy meal topped with a simple tomato-based sauce or olive, garlic, chilli and fresh herbs.
- Noodles such as udon or soba are also a great alternative for Asian inspired meals.
- Low GI rice including Basmati are a great staple for pilaffs or to accompany casseroles and curries.
- Choose Pearl couscous rather than instant couscous.
- Quinoa can also be cooked ahead and stored in the fridge for adding to salads or an alternative to rice.

### 3. Low GI breads and flat breads
- Low GI flat breads and white corn tortillas can be turned into quick and easy toasted melts or wraps.
- Add loads of vegetables and canned beans for protein boost.

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4. Lower GI potatoes and sweet potatoes
   - Avoid chips and roast potatoes in wedges until crisp with a little oil.
   - Cooked and cooled potatoes actually lower the GI further and can be added to salads.

5. Canned fish such as tuna, salmon and sardines
   - Rich in protein and omega-3 fats are great to add to salads or out a can in lunchboxes with grainy bread. Choose the unflavoured varieties for less salt.

6. Canned tomatoes
   - A great base for almost anything. Use in pasta-based sauces with meat or legumes.

7. Nuts, seeds and nut-butter
   - A protein boost to meals and added crunch they provide heart-healthy fats.

8. Vinegars
   - Balsamic, red-wine or white, they all add flavour to sauces and dressings without added kilojoules. Best of all, vinegar actually helps lower the GI of meals.

9. Canned fruits
   - Great to have on hand for an easy dessert or top onto cereal. Choose the varieties in 100% juice.

10. Asian sauces
    - Boosts flavour without adding kilojoules but high in salt. Use sparingly and even add a little water to dilute.

1. Fresh pasta and noodles
   - Filled ravioli and tortellini are super quick to cook and great to have on hand. Serve with fresh cut tomatoes dressed with a little balsamic vinegar.
   - Many Asian noodles such as Hokkien, Udon and rice vermicelli have lower GI regardless if they are made of wheat or rice.

2. Dairy desserts and yoghurts
   - Reduced fat plain or fruit yoghurt are low GI and provide the most calcium with fewer kilojoules.
   - Use natural or plain yoghurt as a condiment or sauce in savoury dishes.

3. Dips
   - Hummus is a quick and easy low GI spread in sandwiches or as a snack with wholegrain crackers or vegetable sticks for dipping.
   - Yoghurt based dips such as Tzatziki can also be topped on savoury dishes for added flavour.

4. Milks
   - Dairy milks are packed full of protein and low GI. If you are watching kilojoules go for reduced fat varieties.
   - Choose plant-based milks such as soy, almond or oat with added calcium. Rice milk tends to be higher in GI.

5. Cheese
   - Cottage and ricotta cheeses are lower in fat. Parmesan adds lots of flavour and a little can go a long-way.

6. Frozen vegetables
- Just as good as fresh as they are snap frozen, locking in the nutrients and handy to add for a quick meal.

7. Frozen berries
- Berries can make desserts special, add colour and flavour to smoothies and you don’t have to wait for berry season.

8. Fresh Vegetables
- Just like your plate, your fridge should be stacked with whatever is in season. Bags of baby spinach and salad leaves are also handy to use as a base for main meal salads.

9. Fresh Fruit
- While fruit looks great in a bowl on the table, it’s best to store fruits such as low GI apples, pears and grapes in the fridge to keep fresh and crisp.
- Bananas are also super convenient to pack in bags for a low GI and sustaining snack.

10. Herbs
- Having fresh herbs on hand will really impart flavour without the need to add too much salt to meals.
- Store soft leafy herbs such as basil, parsley and mint etc. loosely wrapped in moist paper towel to last longer.

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