

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

Diabetes: Guidance on Glycaemic Index

The Glycaemic Index (GI)

- Carbohydrate - containing foods increase blood glucose levels.
- Different carbohydrate foods affect blood glucose levels differently - the GI is a measure of this.
- Foods with a low GI release their glucose slowly into the blood, helping to control blood glucose levels.

Remember that a large quantity of ANY food which contains carbohydrate will cause blood glucose to rise, even if it has a low GI. Keep portion sizes small to prevent high blood glucose, and to help control your weight.

High GI foods do not need to be avoided altogether.

- Try to reduce how often you eat them; only have a small portion or try combining them with a low GI food as this will reduce the overall GI.
- Some foods have a low or medium GI because they are high in fat (which can slow absorption). This does not always make them good food choices. Foods in this group include chocolate and crisps, so avoid having these regularly. Eating protein (eggs, meat, fish, beans, pulses, nuts/nut butters, cheese, quorn, tofu) with a meal will help to reduce the GI of the meal.



Patient Information

Lower GI Foods (choose regularly)	Higher GI Foods (choose less often)
<p>Oats, oatmeal, oat-based cereals, e.g. low-sugar muesli, porridge, Special K™, Allbran™</p> <p>Tomato juice</p>	<p>Cornflakes, Rice Krispies™, sugar-coated cereals</p> <p>Sugar, honey, syrups and jams</p> <p>Sugary squashes, pops, fruit juices</p>
<p>Multi grain bread (granary type - the more grains the better), pitta bread, rye bread,</p> <p>chapattis (wholegrain/gram flour), oatcakes</p> <p>Nuts, nut butters and seeds</p>	<p>White, 50/50 type, brown or wholemeal bread, bagels, crumpets</p> <p>Sugary cakes and biscuits (with sugary toppings or fillings)</p>
<p>Pasta (made from durum wheat) and noodles</p> <p>Basmati or American long-grain rice, pearl barley, Quinoa, buckwheat or bulgur wheat,</p> <p>sweet potato, plantain, semolina, maize meal and yams, new potatoes (small, waxy ones)</p>	<p>Pasta (not made from durum wheat)</p> <p>Other rice varieties e.g. ordinary long grain, jasmine, 'sticky' types</p> <p>Older crop potatoes (especially mashed)</p>
<p>Fresh/tinned/frozen fruit (1 portion/ 1 handful)</p> <p>plain, natural yogurt</p> <p>Diet yogurt, e.g. Mullerlight™, Weight Watchers™, Shape™, Irish Diet™ or supermarket's own brand of diet yogurt</p>	<p>Dried fruits, fruit juices & smoothies</p> <p>'Low fat', flavoured yogurts <i>may</i> have lots of added sugar (check the label)</p>
<p>All types of vegetables and salad crops, lentils, dahls; all types of beans, including kidney, soya, haricot and baked beans, chick peas and mung beans</p>	

Patient Information

Low GI meal ideas

Breakfast

- Low GI cereal e.g. porridge, low-sugar muesli
- 1 portion of fruit/berries plus natural plain yogurt and a sprinkle of chopped/sliced nuts
- Granary bread or toast with eggs

Lunch

- Try a variety of breads for sandwiches e.g. multigrain, pitta or rye and include some protein in the filling
- Small jacket potato with protein; e.g. tuna, egg & reduced fat mayo, cheese or beans
- Try soups containing beans, lentils, meat or fish
- Wholegrain/granary toast with beans, egg, fish; e.g. sardines, or peanut /almond butter
- Low GI starchy food (from list on table) plus some protein (meat, fish, eggs, quorn, beans or pulses) and lots of salad/vegetables

Evening Meal

- Add beans or pulses to casseroles, stews or stir fries
- Try some sweet potato, buckwheat, quinoa or bulgur wheat for a change
- If you have potato, eat it with a lower GI food; e.g. beans, cheese, meat, fish, egg or a vegetarian protein substitute
- Try having roti/chapatti or rice with soya, chicken or egg curry and a large helping of salad or vegetables

Snacks

- One portion of fruit makes an excellent snack (a handful)
- Low GI bread or toast
- Natural/diet yogurt
- Oatcakes with low fat cream cheese
- Handful of unsalted nuts or seeds

Patient Information

For more information on glycaemic index, ask your dietitian.

If you look on the internet or in Low GI diet books, there is lots of information on glycaemic index and you may notice that some information on specific foods can be contradictory.

We have tried to keep the advice we give simple and it includes foods there seems to be the most agreement with in all the tables. It takes into account the glycaemic index along with the portion size - the more food you have, the greater the glycaemic load and the greater the effect on blood glucose.

There is a helpful BDA factsheet available online at:

www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/Gldiet.pdf

Further Information

This leaflet has been produced by Coventry Dietitians, University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust. If you have any questions or would like further information, please contact them on telephone number: 024 7696 6161.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 6161 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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