

Glycaemic Index

Carbohydrate foods are an important part of a healthy eating plan which is low in saturated fat and high in fibre.

Which foods contain carbohydrate?

Breakfast cereals	Potatoes	Yoghurt
Pasta	Legumes	Cakes
Rice	Fruit	Biscuits
Bread	Fruit juice	Lollies
Grains	Milk	Sugar

All carbohydrate breaks down into glucose. The glucose is then absorbed from the gut into the blood. Glucose is used by the body for energy.

What is Glycaemic Index?

Carbohydrate foods are broken down by the body at different rates. Some foods cause the blood glucose levels to rise higher than other foods. The glycaemic index (G.I) is a measure of how a carbohydrate foods affects the blood glucose level.

A food with a low glycaemic index has less effect on blood glucose levels as the carbohydrate is more slowly broken down and absorbed.

A food with a high glycaemic index is more quickly broken down and resulting in higher blood glucose levels.

Why choose low G.I. foods?

Low G.I. foods can help with:

- controlling blood glucose levels if you have diabetes
- weight loss by keeping you fuller for longer
- lowering blood cholesterol levels.

Eat at least one low G.I. food in each meal.

Carbohydrate foods	Examples of low glycaemic index choices ¹
Bread	Wholegrain breads such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Country Life Bakery Performax™ ▪ Burgen™ Soy -Lin ▪ Tip-Top™ 9 -grain Taylor' s wholemeal Sour Dough Heavy fruit bread
Cereals	Rolled oats/porridge Untoasted muesli All-Bran™ Mini-Wheats™ (wholewheat) Guardian™ Weet-bix Hi-bran™ Rice bran Oat bran
Grains	Barley, buckwheat, bulgur
Pasta and noodles	All types (except gluten free)
Rice	Basmati rice Sunrice doongara rice
Legumes	All dried and canned varieties including baked beans, kidney beans, lentils
Starchy vegetables	Sweet potato Sweet corn Note: Non-starchy vegetables such as salad vegetables, green leafy vegetables and orange vegetables have little effect on blood glucose levels.
Fruit	Most fruit including apple, pear, orange, peach, plum, firm bananas, grapes & cherries
Dairy products	Milk, yoghurt, custard & soy drink Choose reduced or low fat varieties.

¹ This information is provided for education purposes and does not constitute DAA endorsement of a particular brand and/or product. There may be additional brands and/or products that are also appropriate choices.

Quantity

The quantity of carbohydrate foods you eat will also affect your blood glucose levels.

Talk to your dietitian about the recommended quantities of carbohydrate based foods you need.

Sugar

People with diabetes can include a small amount of sugar as part of a healthy eating plan. For example, adding 1-2 teaspoons of sugar to porridge or 1-2 teaspoons of regular jam spread on wholegrain bread is acceptable.

However, foods that are based entirely on sugar, such as soft drinks, cordial and lollies are not recommended. It is best to use sugar-free alternatives such as diet soft drinks and cordial if you are having these products.

Finally...

People respond differently to different foods regardless of the food's glycaemic index. It is best to monitor your own blood glucose levels to see how different foods affect your levels.

For more information about glycaemic index

Book

"The New Glucose Revolution", 3rd edition (2002). Prof Jennie Brand-Miller, Kaye Foster-Powell, Assoc Prof Stephen Colagiuri.

Website

www.glycemicindex.com

Contacting a dietitian

For further information please contact an Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD). To find an APD phone the APD hot line on 1800 812 942 or look on the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) website www.daa.asn.au.