

Low Glycaemic Index Foods (Slow Releasing Carbohydrates)

Department of Nutrition & Dietetics

Information for patients,
relatives and carers

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The Glycaemic Index and Benefits of Low GI Carbohydrates

The glycaemic index (GI) is a ranking system for carbohydrate foods according to their effect on blood glucose levels. Each time you eat or drink something sugary or starchy the blood glucose level in your body rises. Some foods cause a rapid increase and others cause a slow, steady rise in blood glucose levels. The latter are known as 'low GI foods' or 'slow-release carbohydrates'.

Including low GI foods as part of your meals and snacks can help to control 'after meal' rises in blood glucose levels and may improve overall control of diabetes and some other conditions.

The GI of foods can be impacted by:

- The presence of wholegrain and certain types of fibre in the food
- The type of sugar in the food
- The presence of fat, protein or acid e.g. vinegar, in the food
- The degree of processing or the degree of ripening
- Cooking methods e.g. frying, boiling or baking
- Whether the food is eaten hot or cooked and then eaten once cooled (this results in resistant starch causing the food to have a lower GI e.g. potato salad or pasta salad)

The total amount of carbohydrate foods eaten will have the biggest influence on blood sugar levels, so be mindful of portion sizes.

Nutritious low-fat foods such as bread, breakfast cereals and many fruits and vegetables should not be avoided simply because they have a high GI.

Some high GI foods such as wholemeal bread and jacket potatoes, are good sources of fibre and therefore still a healthy choice. Similarly, some high fat foods have a low GI but should not be included regularly, especially if you need to lose weight or have a raised cholesterol.



Low GI Carbohydrates as Part of your Healthy Balanced Diet

- Try rice, pasta or noodles as an alternative to frozen chips
- Use new potatoes or sweet potatoes for variety
- Opt for granary, pumpernickel or rye bread to make your sandwiches
- Try porridge, muesli or wholegrain cereals
- Add a small amount of healthy fat and/or protein to your meals to lower the GI of the overall meal

| Low GI Foods (Slow-Release Carbohydrates) | Medium GI Foods (Medium Release Carbohydrates) | High GI Foods (Fast Release Carbohydrates) |
|--|---|---|
| Apples, oranges, pears, peaches, plums, grapefruit, grapes, apricots (fresh or dried), banana (yellow with green sections), mango, strawberries, cherries, blueberries | Banana (yellow with black spots), melon, dried fruit, pineapple, dates, raisins, kiwi | Watermelon |
| All beans, lentils, chickpeas, split peas Nuts and seeds | | |
| White or wholemeal pasta, egg pasta | Gnocchi, udon noodles, rice vermicelli noodles | Gluten free pasta, corn pasta, rice pasta, canned spaghetti |

| Low GI Foods (Slow-Release Carbohydrates) | Medium GI Foods (Medium Release Carbohydrates) | High GI Foods (Fast Release Carbohydrates) |
|---|--|---|
| Brown rice, bulgar wheat, buckwheat, quinoa, pearl barley, microwave rice | Basmati rice, wild rice, couscous, Arborio rice, polenta, long grain white rice | Short grain rice, Easy cook long grain rice, sushi rice, jasmine rice, instant rice, tapioca |
| Rolled oats, no added sugar muesli, All Bran, porridge, Bran Flakes | Mini wheats, Shredded Wheat, Weetabix, Sultana Bran, Oatibix, instant porridge, Special K, Fruit and Fibre | Cornflakes, Crunchy Nut Cornflakes, Rice Krispies, puffed wheat, Coco Pops, Cheerios |
| Multi-grain or mixed-grain bread, soya and linseed bread, granary bread, oatbran bread, chapattis, rye bread, tortilla wraps, fruit loaf, sourdough, seeded bread, pumpernickel bread | Crumpets, rye crisp bread, pitta bread, croissant, taco shells, malt bread | White, wholemeal and brown bread, baguettes, bagels, melba toast, Naan bread, English muffins |
| Oat cakes, Rich Tea biscuits, fruit loaf, tea cakes, Ryvita with seeds | Ryvita, plain digestive biscuits, shortbread, muesli bars, popcorn (plain/salted), flapjack, crisps | Waffles, water biscuits, rice cakes, cream crackers, corn thins, pretzels |
| Milk (all dairy), low fat yoghurt, ice cream, custard, soya milk | Sorbet, oat milk | Rice milk |
| Sweet potato | New or boiled potatoes, chips/fries | Jacket/mashed/instant potato |

Lower GI Meal Ideas

Breakfasts

- Oat based cereal like porridge or no-added sugar muesli and add fruit
- All Bran or Sultana Bran and milk
- Multigrain bread/toast and low sugar jam

Lunches

- Baked beans on toast with a small amount of reduced-fat cheese
- Soup e.g. lentil-based soup
- Granary roll with filling
- Mixed bean salad
- Pasta salad

Main Meals

- Spaghetti Bolognese
- Vegetable lasagne
- Stir fried chicken and vegetables with noodles
- Curry with dhal and basmati rice
- Grilled meat with vegetables and new potatoes
- Chili con-carne and basmati rice
- Meals with pulses added e.g. beef casserole with butter beans, shepherd's pie with baked beans added to the mince

Snacks

- Fruit
- Diet yoghurt
- Nuts (in moderation)
- Rich tea biscuit



Notes

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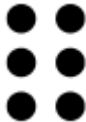


Notes

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