



Use the Glycemic Index to Make Healthy Food Choices

For individuals living with diabetes, controlling blood sugar levels is important to managing the condition. As a result, the glycemic index was created as a simple way to measure each individual food's effect on blood sugar. But even for non-diabetics, choosing foods low on the glycemic index can have positive health effects.

Simply put, the glycemic index (GI) is a ranking system of foods that contain carbohydrates, based on how much they raise your blood sugar levels. Specifically, the GI measures how much a 50-gram carbohydrate portion raises blood sugar compared with pure glucose – basically white bread. The GI is based on a scale of 1 to 100: low (less than 55), moderate (56-69) and high (greater than 70).

Virtually all carbohydrates are digested into glucose – which your body uses for energy – causing a temporary rise in blood sugar levels. This temporary rise, also known as the “glycemic response,” is affected by various factors, including the quantity of food, the amount and type of carbohydrate, the cooking method, whether the food is highly processed, and more.

Low GI Foods Promote Good Health

While the GI's primary purpose is to help diabetics manage blood sugar levels, it also gained notoriety as a part of many popular diet plans. But if weight loss is your goal, the amount of calories you consume is still the most important factor.

Aiming for low-glycemic foods still has potential health benefits though. Carbohydrate foods with a low GI score tend to be healthier, nutrient-rich and higher in fiber. The fiber-rich foods are especially important because they help you feel full longer and can prevent overeating. Studies have shown that people who eat high-glycemic foods tend to have higher levels of body fat, which can lead to obesity, heart disease and diabetes.

- **Keep in mind:** Knowing whether a particular food has a high or low GI is just a start. Several factors can change a food's GI, including:
 - Eating other foods at the same time
 - The amount of protein or fat in a particular food
 - How the food was prepared
 - Your body's unique reaction to the food
- Talk to the LiveLifeWell Registered Dietitian to learn more about combining and preparing foods to achieve the lowest GI levels that are right for you. You'll get free, confidential and personalized advice.
- Visit iLiveLifeWell.com to learn more, or call **(847) 937-5001** to schedule an appointment today!

Eat Less of These...	Eat More of These...
White bread	Multi- or whole grain bread
Baked goods	Fruits
Refined sugar	Raw agave nectar
Steamed, mashed or baked potatoes	Vegetables
White pasta	Protein-enriched or whole wheat pasta
Rice	Dried beans and lentils
Low-fiber cereals (cornflakes, puffed wheat/rice)	Oatmeal, all-bran and muesli
Pretzels	Peanuts

Food	Glycemic Rating	Glycemic Index	Food	Glycemic Rating	Glycemic Index
<i>Bakery Items:</i>			<i>Root Crop:</i>		
Pound cake	Low	54	Sweet potato	Low	54
Muffin (unsweetened)	Medium	62	Potato, steamed	Medium	65
Waffles	High	76	Potato chips	High	75
Doughnut	High	76	Potato, baked	High	85
<i>Beverages:</i>			<i>Snack Food and Sweets:</i>		
Soy milk	Low	30	Peanuts	Low	15
Apple juice	Low	41	Popcorn	Medium	55
Orange juice	Low	52	Pretzels	High	81
<i>Breads:</i>			<i>Vegetables and Beans:</i>		
Multi-grain bread	Low	48	Broccoli	Low	15
Whole grain	Low	50	Green beans	Low	15
Pita bread, white	Medium	57	Peppers, all varieties	Low	15
White bread	High	71	Spinach	Low	15
White rolls	High	73	Zucchini	Low	15
<i>Breakfast Cereals:</i>			Kidney beans, boiled	Low	29
Oatmeal, non-instant	Low	49	Chickpeas	Low	33
Mini Wheats	Medium	57	Kidney beans, canned	Low	52
Shredded Wheat	Medium	69	<i>Fruits:</i>		
Rice Krispies	High	82	Apples	Low	38
Cornflakes	High	83	Peaches	Low	42
<i>Dairy Items:</i>			Oranges	Low	44
Milk, fat-free	Low	32	Bananas	Low	54
Ice-cream (low-fat)	Low	50	Fruit cocktail	Medium	55
Ice-cream	Medium	61	Raisins	Medium	64
<i>Grains:</i>			Pineapple	Medium	66
Rye	Low	34	Watermelon	High	72
Rice, instant	Low	46	<i>Pasta:</i>		
Rice, brown	Medium	55	Spaghetti, whole wheat	Low	37
Taco Shell	Medium	68	Spaghetti, white	Low	41
Millet	High	71	Macaroni and cheese	Medium	64
<i>Pasta:</i>			Rice pasta, brown	High	92
Spaghetti, whole wheat	Low	37			
Spaghetti, white	Low	41			
Macaroni and cheese	Medium	64			
Rice pasta, brown	High	92			