

Glycemic index

Information for patients and families

What is the glycemic index (GI)?

This is a tool to compare foods that contain carbohydrate. It compares how quickly the foods raise blood sugar levels. The higher the glycemic index, the faster the food spikes the blood sugar.

Low GI foods	55 and below
Medium GI foods	56 to 69
High GI foods	70 and above

What else affects the glycemic index of foods?

- The way that foods are prepared can affect the speed at which it turns into sugar. For example, pasta cooked 'al dente' (slightly firm in the centre), turns into sugar more slowly than if it is overcooked.
- The ripeness of fruits can also affect the speed at which it turns into sugar. For example, a banana that is slightly green (under-ripe) turns into sugar more slowly than a banana that is bright yellow (ripe) or has brown spots (over-ripe).

Why should I choose foods that have a lower glycemic index?

- Improve control of your blood sugar
- Better for your cholesterol
- Help to make you feel full for longer

How can I choose foods that have a lower glycemic index?

- Choose low GI foods most often, medium GI foods more often and high GI foods least often.
- Eat a variety of carbohydrate-containing foods from different food groups, such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, dairy and grains.
- Try to include at least one low glycemic food at each meal.

Glycemic Index Tables

Breads

Low GI (55 and below)	Medium GI (56 to 69)	High GI (70 and above)
cracked wheat bread pumpernickel (whole grain) sourdough bread 100% stone-ground bread, (whole wheat) corn tortilla rye bread	light rye bread hamburger bun pita taco shell bran muffin croissant pancake	white bread French baguette kaiser roll cornbread bagel English muffin donut waffle

Breakfast cereals

Low GI (55 and below)	Medium GI (56 to 69)	High GI (70 and above)
All-bran Bran-buds with psyllium buckwheat (groats) oat bran oatmeal (old fashioned) Red River cereal	cream of wheat (old fashioned) Life cereal Quick oats Special K Puffed wheat	Bran flakes Rice Krispies cream of wheat (instant) Shredded wheat Cheerios Cornflakes

Grains

Low GI (55 and below)	Medium GI (56 to 69)	High GI (70 and above)
pasta (cooked 'al dente') parboiled/converted rice barley, bulgur	basmati rice long-grain, white rice rice vermicelli gnocchi brown rice	instant rice

Crackers or cookies

Low GI (55 and below)	Medium GI (56 to 69)	High GI (70 and above)
oatmeal cookie	Arrowroot Ryvita dark rye Stone wheat thins	Melba toast rice cake soda cracker vanilla wafer

Legumes

Low GI (55 and below)	Medium GI (56 to 69)	High GI (70 and above)
beans (kidney, black, etc.) black-eyed peas lentils soy beans split peas		

Dairy and non-dairy substitutes

Low GI (55 and below)	Medium GI (56 to 69)	High GI (70 and above)
buttermilk milk/soy milk yogurt	ice cream	tofu frozen desserts

Starchy vegetables

Low GI (55 and below)	Medium GI (56 to 69)	High GI (70 and above)
sweet potatoes yams squash	beets potatoes (baked/boiled) sweet corn	French fries parsnips potatoes (mashed/instant) rutabaga carrots

Fruits

Low GI (55 and below)	Medium GI (56 to 69)	High GI (70 and above)
apricots (dried) all berries apple banana cherries grapes grapefruit mango orange peach pear plum	apricots (fresh) papaya pineapple raisins	watermelon dates

All other vegetables are low GI – eat lots!

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