

# The Glycemic Index of Foods

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## What is the Glycemic Index (GI)?

It is a method used to classify carbohydrate containing foods, according to the effect that they may have on blood sugar levels. It is claimed that the higher the GI number, the greater the effect is on your blood sugar. Foods with a lower GI number raise blood sugar levels slower than foods with a higher GI number.

## What are the possible benefits of eating foods that have a low GI?

- may help you have better blood sugar control
- may lower your risk of heart disease
- may help with weight management by making you feel less hungry

## Things to consider when using the GI

While the GI may have promise for the future, it is currently not used by all diabetes educators for these reasons:

- The actual GI of a single food may change when eaten with other foods.
  - Some foods having a low GI are also high in fat and calories. A high fat diet is not recommended for people with diabetes.
  - There is currently no standard method to measure the GI of foods. Tables use either bread or glucose as a standard.
  - How the food is prepared can affect the GI.
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## What is the bottom line?

The GI may be useful in making food choices that will promote better blood sugar control. However, a healthy diet cannot be based solely on the GI. The amount of carbohydrate, fibre, salt, and fat should also be considered.

### What you can do to possibly lower the GI of foods:

- Try to eat foods as close to their whole and natural state as possible – avoid processed food. For example, use steel cut oatmeal versus instant oatmeal.
- Have grains that are high in fibre such as whole grain breads and cereals.
- Have low fat milk or yogurt with meals.
- Add vinegar, lemon juice or citrus fruit to foods.

To learn more about the glycemic index, check out these websites:

#### **Canadian Diabetes Association**

<http://www.diabetes.ca/>

#### **International Diabetes Institute**

<http://www.diabetes.com.au/home.htm>

#### **Canadian Sugar Institute**

<http://www.sugar.ca/>

Talk to your dietitian if you have questions.

## Dietitian's suggestions:

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2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

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(values expressed as a percentage of the value of glucose, GI=100)

Low Glycemic Index (55 or less)	Medium Glycemic Index (56 to 69)	High Glycemic Index (70 or more)
<b>Breads</b>		
Oatbran Bread Pumpnickel bread	Croissant English muffin, white Hamburger bun, white Pita bread Rye bread Sourdough rye White bread	Bagel, white Bread stuffing mix Crumpet French bread Kaiser roll, white Melba toast, white Whole wheat bread
<b>Cereals</b>		
All Bran Bran Buds with Psyllium Oat Bran Red River Cereal Special K Steel cut oats	Bran Buds (without psyllium) Cream of Wheat Grapenuts Life Muesli Oatmeal, instant Puffed Wheat Shredded Wheat Instant Oats	Bran Flakes Cheerios Corn Bran Corn Chex Corn Flakes Cream of Wheat, instant Crispix Golden Grahams Grapenut Flakes Rice Chex Rice Krispies Total Weetabix
<b>Grains</b>		
Bulgar Cracked Barley Pearled Barley Rice, parboiled long grain, white Rye Kernels Wheat Kernels	Buckwheat Couscous Rice, basmati Rice, brown Rice, long grain, wild Taco shells	Corn chips Cornmeal Rice cakes Rice, instant Rice, sticky Tapioca

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<b>Pasta</b>		
Capellini Cheese Tortellini Fettuccini Instant noodles Macaroni and cheese (homemade) Spaghetti Spaghetti, whole wheat	Macaroni and Cheese (boxed) Rice vermicelli	
<b>Crackers</b>		
	Breton wheat crackers Rye crispbread Stoned wheat thins	Premium soda crackers
<b>Beans and Lentils</b>		
Chick peas, boiled Chick peas, canned Kidney beans, canned Lentils, canned Lima beans Pinto beans, canned White beans, boiled Yellow split peas, boiled	Bakes beans Black beans Split pea soup	
<b>Milk and Milk Products</b>		
Custard Low fat ice cream Low fat yogurt, artificially sweetened Low fat yogurt, sugar sweetened Skim milk Soy milk		

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<b>Fruits and Fruit Products</b>		
Apple Apple juice Apricots, dried Banana Cherries Grapefruit Grapes Kiwi Orange Orange juice, not from concentrate Peach Peaches, canned in natural juice Pear Pears, canned in natural juice Pineapple juice Plum	Fruit cocktail	Watermelon Dates
<b>Vegetables</b>		
Artichoke Asparagus Broccoli Carrots, cooked Carrots, raw Cauliflower Celery Cucumber Eggplant Green beans Green peas Lettuce, all varieties Peppers, all varieties Snow peas Spinach Summer squash Tomato soup Tomatoes Zucchini	Kernel corn	Parsnips

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<b>Potatoes</b>		
Yam	Potato, sweet Potato, white, baked Potato, white, boiled	French fries Instant mashed potatoes Potato, white, boiled and mashed
<b>Cakes and Cookies</b>		
Banana bread Oatmeal cookies Pound cake	Angel food cake Arrowroot cookies Digestive cookies Flan cake	Doughnuts Graham wafers Vanilla wafers
<b>Other</b>		
Nuts	Cheese pizza	Waffles, frozen Honey Pretzels