

# The Glycemic Index

## What is the Glycemic Index of food?

The Glycemic Index (GI) is a scale that ranks carbohydrate-rich foods by how much they raise blood glucose levels compared to a standard food. The standard food is glucose or white bread.

## Why should I eat foods with a low Glycemic Index?

Eating foods with a low Glycemic Index may help you to:

- Control your blood glucose level
- Control your cholesterol level
- Control your appetite
- Lower your risk of developing heart disease
- Lower your risk of developing type 2 diabetes

## Use these meal planning ideas to include the Glycemic Index as part of healthy eating.

- Enjoy vegetables, most fruits and low-fat milk products with your meals. These are carbohydrate-rich foods that, in general, have low glycemic index.
- Plan your meals with foods in the low and medium Glycemic Index starch choices on the list that follows.
- Try foods such as barley, bulgar, or lentils, which have a low Glycemic Index.
- Consult a registered dietitian for help with choosing low GI foods, adapting recipes, and other ways to incorporate low GI foods in your meal plan.

## If I eat foods with a low Glycemic Index can I eat as much as I want?

No. Using the Glycemic Index to choose foods is only or

Healthy eating also means:

- Eating at regular times
- Choosing a variety of foods from all food groups
- Limiting sugars and sweets
- Reducing the amount of fat you eat
- Including foods high in fibre
- Limiting salt

**remember that checking your blood glucose before and 2 hours after a meal is the best way to know how your body handles the meal.**



A lot of starchy foods have a high Glycemic Index (GI). Choose medium and low GI foods more often.

<b>LOW GI (55 or less) * †</b> Choose most often	<b>MEDIUM GI (56-69) * †</b> Choose more often	<b>HIGH GI (70 or more) * †</b> Choose less often
<b>BREADS:</b> 100% stone ground whole wheat Heavy mixed grain Pumpernickel	<b>BREADS:</b> Whole wheat Rye Pita	<b>BREADS:</b> White bread Kaiser roll Bagel, white
<b>CEREAL:</b> All Bran™ Bran Buds with Psyllium™ Oat Bran™	<b>CEREAL:</b> Grapenuts™ Puffed wheat Oatmeal Quick oats	<b>CEREAL:</b> Bran flakes Corn flakes Rice Krispies™
<b>GRAINS:</b> Barley Bulgar Pasta/noodles Parboiled or converted rice	<b>GRAINS:</b> Basmati rice Brown rice Couscous	<b>GRAINS:</b> Short-grain rice
<b>OTHER:</b> Sweet potato Yam Legumes Lentils Chickpeas Kidney beans Split peas Soy beans Baked beans	<b>OTHER:</b> Potato, new/white Sweet corn Popcorn Stoned Wheat Thins™ Ryvita™ (rye crisps) Black bean soup Green pea soup	<b>OTHER:</b> Potato, baking (Russet) French fries Pretzels Rice cakes Soda crackers

\*expressed as a percentage of the value for glucose

† Canadian values where available

Adapted with permission from: Foster-Powell K, Holt SHA, Brand-Miller JC. International table of glycemic index and glycemic load values Am J Clin Nutr. 2002;76:5-56

*Across the country, the Canadian Diabetes Association is leading the fight against diabetes by helping people with diabetes live healthy lives while we work to find a cure. Our community-based network of supporters help us provide education and services to people living with diabetes, advocate for our cause, break ground towards a cure and translate research into practical applications.*

\*This document reflects the 2013 Canadian Diabetes Association Clinical Practice Guidelines. ©2013 Copyright



**Related articles:** just the basics, fibre and diabetes, sugars and sweeteners

diabetes.ca | 1-800 BANTING