

I find this guide useful for patients who complain of feeling hungry all the time and/or diabetics who are trying to control their blood sugar levels.

## A GUIDE TO LOW GLYCEMIC INDEX FOODS

1. The glycemic index is a ranking of foods based on their potential to raise blood glucose. The impact a food will have on blood sugar levels depends on many other factors, for instance: ripeness, cooking time, fiber and fat content, time of day, blood insulin levels, and recent activity. Therefore, this index is not to be used in isolation. The total amount of carbohydrate, amount and type of fat, fiber, and salt content, as well as the caloric value are also very important. The glycemic index is a useful, additional tool to help you improve your blood sugar levels. The following are some general tips to get you started:
2. Limit FRUITS to 2 to 3 servings per day. Avoid high sugar, tropical fruits such as pineapple, mango, papaya and banana. **Fruit juices are not allowed** since they are devoid of fiber and high in sugar that can quickly raise blood glucose. Berries have the lowest glycemic index and are therefore most acceptable.
3. Most VEGETABLES are allowed in larger quantities since they have a low sugar content. Exceptions are the “starchy” vegetables, including potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, winter squashes, carrots, peas and corn. Starchy vegetables should be eaten in small amounts.
4. Avoid all highly refined GRAINS, including white flours, white breads, bagels, crackers, pretzels and chips. Commercially baked goods, such as cakes and cookies, as well as pancakes and waffles, should also be avoided. Refined grains are devoid of many nutrients and have a higher glycemic index, as compared to less-refined whole grains.
5. **VEGETARIAN PROTEIN** sources that have little or no sugar and hence, have a low glycemic index include egg whites or egg substitute, tofu, nonfat cottage cheese, and nonfat cheese. Nuts and seeds are also a good source of protein with a low glycemic index, but should be eaten in very small amounts due to their high fat content. In contrast, vegetarian protein sources that contain carbohydrates have a moderate glycemic index and should be consumed in moderate amounts; these include legumes, soy beans, tempeh, vegetable burgers, nonfat milk and nonfat plain yogurt without added sugar.
6. Drink 6-8 glasses of water per day.
7. Do not skip meals. Three small meals with snacks in between are best to maintain moderate blood glucose levels throughout the day, while avoiding the highs and lows.
8. No soft drinks. No fast foods. No fried foods.

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### **GOOD CHOICE**

(low glycemic index)

#### **Breads**

Rye kernel bread  
Barley kernel bread  
Whole wheat kernel  
Multi-grain

#### **Breakfast Cereals**

All-Bran  
Fiber One  
Rice Bran

#### **Cereal Grains**

Barley  
Whole kernel wheat  
Whole kernel rye  
Long-grain parboiled rice

#### **Dairy**

Unsweetened low-fat yogurt

#### **Fruit**

Apple  
Cherries  
Grapefruit  
Peach  
Pear, plum

#### **Legumes**

Chickpeas  
Lentils  
Green beans  
Red beans  
Baby lima beans  
Kidney beans, soy beans  
Split peas

#### **Pasta**

Fettuccini, egg-enriched  
Spaghetti, protein enriched  
  
Spaghetti, whole meal

moderate glycemic index

50% oat bran bread  
Whole grain pumpernickel  
Cracked wheat kernel bread  
whole-wheat bread

Toasted muesli  
Oat bran  
Oat meal (slow cook)  
Kashi Go LEAN  
Kashi Good Friends

Cracked Barley  
Bulgar  
Corn  
Brown rice

Low-fat fruit yogurt

Apple juice (unsweetened)  
Grapes, orange  
Dried apricots  
Canned pear in juice

canned chickpeas  
black-eyed peas  
Pinto beans  
Navy beans  
Romano beans

Capellini  
Spaghetti (cooked Al Dente)  
  
Macaroni (boiled 5 min)

### **PLEASE AVOID**

(high glycemic index)

rye flour bread  
bagels  
pita bread  
white bread

Cheerios, Bran chex  
Instant Oatmeal, Puffed kashi  
Grapenuts, Life, Chex cereal  
Puffed wheat, puffed Kashi  
Shredded wheat, corn flakes  
Cream of wheat, Nutri-grain

Rolled Barley  
Buckwheat, cornmeal  
White rice, millet

Frozen yogurt

Banana, mango  
Orange juice, canned peaches  
in syrup, kiwi, raisins  
Pineapple, papaya  
Avoid fruit juices

Canned baked beans  
broad beans  
Canned green beans  
Navy beans (pressure cooked  
25 minutes)

Rice pasta, brown  
Spaghetti (boiled > than 20  
minutes)  
Macaroni and cheese boxed

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### Low Glycemic Index

#### Vegetables

Asparagus, broccoli  
Brussel sprouts  
Bok Choy, cabbage  
Cauliflower, dried peas  
Dark leafy greens, eggplant  
Mushrooms, romaine lettuce,  
Spinach, summer squash  
Tomatoes

\*sweet potato has moderate to high index

#### Soups

Tomato

### Moderate Glycemic Index

Green peas  
Sweet potato\*  
Yam

Canned lentil

### High Glycemic Index

Beetroot, carrots, parsnips  
Russet potato, instant potato  
New potato, pumpkin, Sweet  
potato\*, sweet corn, French fries  
winter squash

Black bean, green pea (canned)

#### Snack Foods

Peanuts  
Almonds  
Walnuts (nuts and seeds)

Jelly beans, life savers, Mars  
bar, muesli bars, popcorn, corn  
chips, potato chips, crackers,  
Cookies

#### Sugars

Fructose

Lactose

Maltose, glucose, honey,  
Sucrose (table sugar)

#### References

Foster-Powell, K. Brand-Miller, J. International tables of glycemic index. Am J Clin Nutr 1995;62:871S-93S.

Brand-Miller, J. Diets with a low glycemic index: from theory to practice. Nutrition Today, 1995; March 1-13.

Raloff, J. The new GI tracks. Science News. April 8, 2000:1-7.

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**Remember – its just a guide – see if it works for you!**