

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

Moderate Glycemic Index

Green peas
Sweet potato*
Yam

High Glycemic Index

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

*sweet potato has moderate to high index

Soups

Tomato

Canned lentil

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

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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!