

The glycemic index: a Tongan quick guide

What is the glycemic index?

The glycemic index (GI) is a guide to which carbohydrate foods break down into glucose slowly or quickly. It helps you choose which carbohydrate foods to eat to manage your diabetes and weight.

What are the benefits of lower GI foods?

Low GI foods are the best to eat because research shows they:

- break down into glucose slowly
- can make you feel full for longer

Ways to eat lower GI

- include a lower GI food at each meal*
- choose lower GI snacks (if you snack)*
- swap higher GI carbohydrate foods for lower GI varieties*
- buy products with the GI symbol (shown on the right) when possible.



GI symbol

Not all lower GI foods are healthier options, such as chocolate and chips, as they are higher in energy, saturated fat and salt. Examples of healthier options are shown on the following pages.

* Choosing lower GI foods does not mean you can eat as much as you like because the amount you eat also affects blood glucose levels. A dietitian can help.

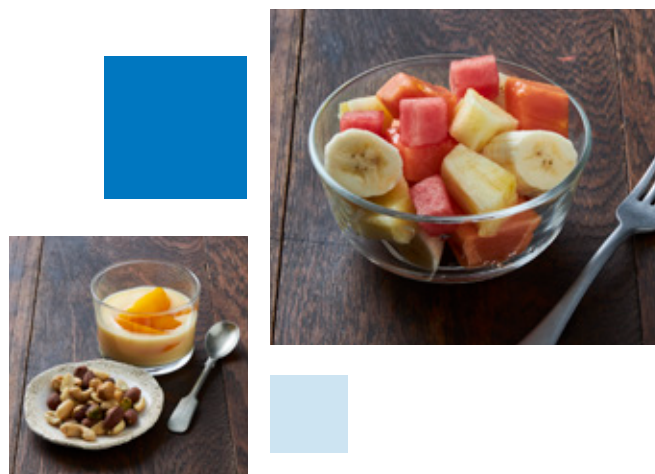
More information

For more information about the glycemic index, go to

gisymbol.com or
glycemicindex.com.

To find a dietitian, go to
dietitiansaustralia.org.au or contact
Dietitians Australia.

Call **1800 812 942** or email
info@dietitiansaustralia.org.au



Breads and wraps

Look for breads and wraps that are higher in fibre and made from wholegrains. Choose breads and wraps with the GI symbol.

Higher GI

- white bread
- white buns
- wholemeal bread
- wholemeal buns
- white English muffins
- crumpets
- bagels

Low & Medium GI



dense grainy or multigrain bread, bun or roll



authentic sourdough



corn tortillas



pumpernickel

Breakfast cereals

Look for wholegrain cereals that are high in fibre, with the least added sugar, or cereals with the GI symbol.

Higher GI

- quick oats
- rice porridge
- cornflakes
- rice bubbles

Low & Medium GI



traditional rolled oats or steel-cut oats



wheat, rice or oat bran



natural muesli



oat bran wheat biscuits

Grains

Look for grains that are higher in fibre, wholegrain varieties, or varieties with the GI symbol.

Higher GI

- jasmine rice
- brown rice
- white rice

Low & Medium GI



pasta (most types)



fresh noodles



Basmati rice or Doongara™ rice



vermicelli

- soba noodles
- mung bean (bean thread noodles)

- quinoa
- barley
- burghul (cracked wheat)

- buckwheat
- pearl (Israeli) couscous

Legumes

Higher GI

- broad beans

Low & Medium GI



baked beans



kidney beans



cannellini beans

brown/green/
red lentils

chickpeas

Other than broad beans, all dried and canned legumes have a low GI.

- soya beans
- mixed beans
- haricot beans

- butter beans
- split peas
- black-eyed peas

Starchy vegetables

Higher GI

- instant mashed potato
- swede
- white potato
- purple sweet potato

Low & Medium GI



taro

green
banana

sweet corn

orange
sweet potato

yam



cassava

Dairy and alternatives

Buy low-fat, unsweetened varieties with added calcium.

Higher GI

- rice milk
- oat milk

Low & Medium GI



milk



soy milk



yoghurt



custard

Biscuits and crackers

Look for biscuits and crackers that are higher in fibre, made from wholegrains, with the least added salt, and varieties with the GI symbol.

Higher GI

- milk coffee biscuits
- puffed rice cakes
- rice crackers
- water crackers
- corn thins

Low & Medium GI



grainy/seeded crackers



biscuits with oats and dried fruit

Fruit

Most fruits have a low GI.

Higher GI

- canned lychees
- watermelon
- jackfruit
- rockmelon/cantaloupe

Low & Medium GI



mangoes



bananas



papayas/paw paws



apples



grapes



kiwifruit



peaches



oranges

- pears
- apricots

- plums
- nectarines

- prunes
- peaches

The glycemic index is a tool to help you choose which carbohydrate foods to eat.

The NDSS and you

A wide range of services and support is available through the NDSS to help you manage your diabetes. This includes information on diabetes management through the NDSS Helpline and website. The products, services and education programs available can help you stay on top of your diabetes.