

# The glycemic index: a 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 fuller 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**



# Low & Medium GI

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



dense grainy/ seeded breads



pumpernickel



authentic sourdough



corn tortillas

#### **Breakfast cereals**

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

# **Higher GI**



- 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**





- brown rice
- white rice

#### Low & Medium GI



pasta (most types)



Basmati rice or Doongara™ rice



quinoa



pearl (Israeli) couscous



fresh or dried rice noodles



barley, bulgur (cracked wheat)



soba noodles



freekeh

mung bean (mung bean thread noodles) buckwheat

#### 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

# Low & Medium GI









sweet corn

orange sweet potato

parsnips

taro

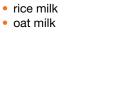
# **Dairy and alternatives**

Buy low-fat, unsweetened varieties with added calcium.

# **Higher 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**



#### Low & Medium GI

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





grainy/seeded crackers

biscuits with oats and dried fruit

#### **Fruit**

Most fruits have a low GI.

#### **Higher GI**

- canned lychees
- watermelon
- longans
- rambutans
- jackfruit
- rockmelon/cantaloupe

#### **Low & Medium GI**









apples





kiwifruits





oranges

peaches



pears

apricots

plums

prunes

mangoesnectarines

# 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.