

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.

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.



GI symbol

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			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • white bread • wholemeal bread • white Turkish bread • white Lebanese bread • English muffins • crumpets • bagels • white buns 	 <p>dense grainy/ seeded breads</p>	 <p>pumpernickel</p>	 <p>authentic sourdough</p>	 <p>corn tortillas</p>









Breakfast cereals

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

Higher GI	Low & Medium GI			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quick oats • rice porridge • cornflakes • rice bubbles 	 <p>traditional rolled oats or steel-cut oats</p>	 <p>wheat, rice or oat bran</p>	 <p>natural muesli</p>	 <p>oat bran wheat biscuits</p>

Grains

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

Higher GI	Low & Medium GI			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • jasmine rice • brown rice • white rice 	 <p>pasta (most types)</p>	 <p>Basmati rice or Doongara™ rice</p>	 <p>quinoa</p>	 <p>pearl (Israeli) couscous</p>
	 <p>fresh or dried rice noodles</p>	 <p>barley, bulgur (cracked wheat)</p>	 <p>soba noodles</p>	 <p>freekeh</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mung bean (mung bean thread noodles) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

- 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	Low & Medium GI
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • milk coffee biscuits • puffed rice cakes • rice crackers • water crackers • corn thins 	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>grainy/seeded crackers</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>biscuits with oats and dried fruit</p> </div> </div>

Fruit

Most fruits have a low GI.

Higher GI	Low & Medium GI			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • canned lychees • watermelon • longans • rambutans • jackfruit • rockmelon/cantaloupe 	 <p>apples</p>	 <p>bananas</p>	 <p>oranges</p>	 <p>grapes</p>
	 <p>prunes</p>	 <p>kiwifruits</p>	 <p>peaches</p>	 <p>pears</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apricots • plums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mangoes • nectarines 		

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.