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<http://www.webmd.com/diet/features/glycemic-index-diet>

The Glycemic Index Diet (Low Glycemic Diet)

By Kathleen M. Zelman, MPH, RD, LD

WebMD Expert Review

Glycemic Diet Index: What It Is

The "glycemic index diet," "GI diet," and "low glycemic diet" are more than diet books. They refer to a system of ranking carbohydrate foods according to how much a certain amount of each food raises a person's blood sugar levels.

Originally developed as a tool to help diabetics manage blood sugar control, the glycemic index has found its way into the mainstream weight loss market. The glycemic index is the basis for many popular diet plans, such as *SouthBeach*, *The Zone*, *Sugar Busters*, *Glucose Revolution*, and *Ending the Food Fight*.

Specifically, the glycemic index (GI) measures how much a 50-gram portion of carbohydrate raises a person's blood-sugar levels compared with a control (that is, white bread or pure glucose). Virtually all carbs are digested into glucose and cause a temporary rise in blood glucose levels, called the glycemic response. This response is affected by many factors, including the quantity of food; the amount and type of carbohydrate; the cooking method; degree of processing, and more. Each food is assigned an index number from 1-100, with 100 as the reference score for pure glucose. Typically, foods are rated high (greater than 70), low (less than 55) or moderate (56-69).

The glycemic index diet's popularity has been fueled by claims that low-GI foods can help control appetite and weight and may be useful for people with diabetes or pre-diabetes. The idea is that low-GI foods are absorbed more slowly, allowing dieters to feel full longer and making them less likely to overeat.

Dieters are encouraged to choose carbohydrate foods with a low glycemic index, which tend to be (but are not necessarily) healthier, nutrient-rich, less refined, and higher in fiber -- like whole fruits, vegetables, and beans.

In contrast, higher GI foods "trigger a rise in blood sugar, followed by a cascade of hormonal changes, which tend to make you hungry again sooner because they are metabolized quicker than low-GI foods," explains David Ludwig, MD, PhD, author of *Ending the Food Fight*.

The blood sugar spikes of high-GI foods are especially problematic for people with diabetes because their bodies have trouble regulating blood sugar. The theory that helped launch all the glycemic index diets is this: If it works to help control blood sugar in diabetic people, then it should work for weight control.

Because the GI diet is an approach to weight loss rather than a specific plan, guidance on fats, protein, alcohol, weight maintenance and exercise vary depending on the plan. Ludwig and most GI diet plans also advocate getting regular exercise and eating moderate amounts of lean protein and healthy fats -- similar to the recommendations of the U.S. government's 2005 Dietary Guidelines.

Glycemic Diet Index: What You Can Eat

Quality, not quantity, of carbs is the mantra of a glycemic index diet. The idea is to feel fuller by enjoying plenty of low-GI "smart" carbs -- whole grains, whole fruits, vegetables and legumes -- along with lean protein and healthy fats. You'll avoid the high GI foods, which tend to be made with white flour and heavily processed.

But confusion can arise when you check the GI score for a food like carrots, which can range from 16 to 92, or for sugar or candy, which can get a lower score than a potato!

The truth is that a low GI score is no guarantee of healthy fare. Low-GI foods include candy bars (a Snickers scores 55) and potato chips (54). Common sense should warn dieters that these treats are not healthy components of a weight-loss diet. Likewise, there are nutritious, high-GI foods, like corn, baked potatoes and fruit juices, that can certainly be part of a healthy weight loss plan.

Ludwig's plan in particular calls for no calorie counting, just a basic understanding of the principles of the glycemic index or glycemic load (a similar calculation in which the glycemic index is multiplied by three times the amount of carbohydrate in a serving).

"There is a psychological benefit when a dieter is not restricted and allowed to eat to satisfy their appetite with healthy foods," says Ludwig.

Glycemic Diet Index: How It Works

Glycemic index diets have become a popular weight loss tool based in part on the theory that high-GI foods raise blood sugar levels, cause the body to secrete excess insulin, and lead to the storage of fat. Nevertheless, a huge debate exists in the nutrition community about the value of the glycemic index for weight loss.

One of the reasons the glycemic index is controversial is because of the variability of the GI scores, which can be altered by many factors, ranging from ripeness to cooking method.

"The riper a banana, the higher the score," explains Rachel Johnson, PhD, MPH, RD, professor and dean at the University of Vermont. "Al dente pasta is higher than more cooked pasta. Add fat to foods and you can lower the GI, or if a product is made with fructose instead of sucrose or table sugar, it is absorbed more slowly and therefore gets a lower GI score."

The GI response to a given food also varies widely from person to person. It can even vary within the same person from day to day, according to research reported in the June 2007 issue of *Diabetes Care*.

"We tested the response when an individual ate the same food on three different occasions, and even within the same person, the range in glucose and insulin was huge," says Tufts University's Alice Lichtenstein, DSc, one of the authors of the study.

Nationally known diabetes expert and author Marion Franz, MS, RD, CDE, says the GI numbers don't mean much because the range is tremendous even within the same foods.

"It is hard to know what the glycemic index of a food really is when something like rice can range from a low of 55 to over 100," she says. Further, "there is no difference in the ranking of white and brown rice, or white and whole wheat bread, and clearly whole grain choices are more healthful."

Indeed, the 2005 Report of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee states, "Current evidence suggests that the glycemic index and/or glycemic load are of little utility for providing dietary guidance for Americans."

Franz also takes issue with the actual glycemic index measurements: "The GI does not measure how *rapidly* glucose levels increase, and studies that compare high- and low- glycemic diets show that the glucose peaks are about the same time" for each, she says.

She explains that blood glucose peaks about the same time with most foods because we rarely eat foods alone, and the addition of fat and/or protein to meals slows down the response time. A high GI-food combined with a low-GI food produces a moderate response.

Still, other experts note there is evidence that eating meals low on the glycemic index can help reduce hunger. In research published in the May 16, 2007, issue of *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, Ludwig and colleagues found that foods with lower GI scores seemed to reduce hunger in obese teenage boys.

"The boys were hungrier after they had eaten a high-GI breakfast, which resulted in eating 600 to 700 more calories at lunchtime than when they ate a low GI breakfast," says Ludwig. And boys on a low-glycemic diet lost more weight than other groups in the study.

In the same study, Ludwig and colleagues also found that low-GI diets seemed to be more effective in people whose bodies secrete more insulin. High insulin secreters tend to be "apple-shaped" people who accumulate fat around their waists, rather than those with more lower-body fat or "pear" shapes. He suggests if you are an "apple" who has not done well on other diets, you may succeed with the GI approach.

Regardless of your shape, Ludwig says, a low glycemic diet can be good for your heart: "In our experience, anyone who followed a low GI diet improved their triglyceride and HDL cholesterol levels, both important cardiovascular risk factors," he says.

Glycemic Diet Index: What the Experts Say

Ludwig, founder of the Optimal Weight for Life program (OWL) at Children's Hospital in Boston, says many children and families have successfully used his 9-week low glycemic plan for weight loss. And many other dieters have reported success using other low glycemic plans.

But Lichtenstein notes that any appetite-reducing effects from the GI diet may stem from the fact that many foods that score low in the glycemic index are also high in fiber, which is filling.

"Diet books have embraced the concept of the glycemic index because it is simple, but there are so many factors that confound the use of the GI as a weight loss tool that it is premature to assume it is the answer," says Lichtenstein.

Franz believes some diet books have distorted the definition of glycemic index. "Even if a high-GI diet gets a slight increase in the glucose peak, it does not stimulate insulin or appetite," she says. While Franz says the glycemic index is useful for diabetics, she thinks it has no real value as a weight loss tool.

Losing weight for the long term is a more complex proposition than choosing low-GI carbs, says American Dietetic Association spokesperson Suzanne Farrell, MS, RD. It's more about what else you're eating and how physically active you are, she says. She says she does not like the GI diet "because it promotes a good food/bad food message. ... It has not been shown to be an effective weight loss tool."

To some experts, the glycemic index is just another gimmick -- but, they say, if this gimmick helps people eat a healthier diet, it can be successful.

Lichtenstein points out that keeping track of GI scores may help some people control calories -- the essence of any successful weight loss plan.

"As long as the food choices are healthy, and it is a diet plan that is sustainable over time and addresses other lifestyle issues such as physical activity, there is no reason not to use this approach, if it works for you," she says.

Johnson thinks a glycemic index diet has merit "as long as you choose healthy carbs that are high in fiber, whole, natural, and less processed to help with satiety and reducing calories." And, she adds, "make sure you get plenty of lean and low-fat protein to pair with the low glycemic index foods. Choose heart-healthy fats, and control portions, because it is easy to overeat even good foods."

She advises consulting a registered dietitian for an individualized calorie prescription and using the glycemic approach to select the healthiest carbs.

Glycemic Diet Index: Food for Thought

There is no such thing as a simple answer for weight control, and no one approach works for everyone. Any diet you can stick with for the long term is the right one for you.

If you don't get too hung up on the numbers and use common sense to select healthy, wholesome carbs, lean protein, and healthy fats, a glycemic index diet may be right for you -- especially if you are pre-diabetic, carry extra weight around your middle, and have not succeeded on traditional diets. Keep in mind that you must also control portion sizes and total calories, and you must get regular physical activity.

While there is plenty of research on the glycemic index, the results have been inconsistent. Further research is needed to reach consensus on whether the glycemic index works as a long-term weight loss plan.

<http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art4498.asp>

Low Glycemic Diet GO and NO Foods

Research shows that a low glycemic diet is the healthiest way to lose weight. And those who follow a good low glycemic diet are at a significantly lower risk for two major killer diseases:

- Heart disease
- And type 2 diabetes.

But, that's not all. Numerous clinical studies and scientific research in England, Australia, Canada and the United States all show that a healthy low glycemic index diet can help you:

- Lose weight,
- Clear up your skin,
- Reduce mood swings,
- Decrease insulin resistance,
- Feel less hunger and food cravings,
- Lower triglyceride levels and blood pressure,
- And achieve long lasting and permanent weight loss.

So let's start our low glycemic diet quest with low glycemic carbohydrates.

Good and Bad Carbohydrates

Goodness gracious! Haven't we heard enough about carbohydrates yet? One side says eat less and the other side says eat more. But neither side is hitting the bull's-eye. However, recent studies have finally caught the bull by the horns – carbohydrates are not created equal!

Bad carbs cause dangerous spikes in blood sugar. While good carbs keep you healthy and fit.

Low glycemic carbohydrates, such as whole grains, beans and most vegetables, are slowly absorbed into the blood stream. But high glycemic carbs, like sugar, potatoes, white bread, white pasta and white rice, are rapidly absorbed, causing high and low blood sugar swings.

Eating high glycemic carbohydrates forces your pancreas to produce an insulin surge to lower your blood sugar as fast as possible. Your body does this by converting sugar into fat. UH-OH!

Your blood sugar then drops way down out of the high danger zone into the low blood sugar zone. While this mechanism protects you from poor food choices, the spiking-then-dropping insulin workout your body goes through makes you feel ravenously hungry. UH-OH, again!

What's more, insulin keeps you from metabolizing the fat you've got stored. And, when you're feeling hungry, since you can't burn your excess fat, you have to eat more food for energy.

Hunting and Gathering vs. Modern Times

A low glycemic diet eliminates the endless insulin roller coaster ride.

In the early days of our existence when food was scarce, we had to hunt and gather more food. In the active process of hunting and gathering, we burned extra fat for energy. But when was the last time food was scarce at your house? Have you had to hunt down any antelope lately?

With our modern lifestyle, there's certainly no famine problem – it's always feast, feast, feast!

If you're eating like most people today, you end up on the glycemic roller coaster every single day. Up and down! Up and down! High and low! High and low! Until one day it's – over and out!

The fat burning doors slam shut and the fat storage doors are jammed wide open. Then we wonder, (while nibbling on a piece of white toast with sugary jam), why we can't lose weight.

It's no mystery. Most people eat way too many high glycemic foods.

"FOODS TO CHOOSE" and "FOODS TO REFUSE" Can Help You Lose Weight

To lose weight naturally, making the best food calorie choices will determine how successful you'll be. Use the glycemic foods index of healthy foods to "GO" with the healthy "FOODS TO CHOOSE" and say "NO" to the unhealthy "FOODS TO REFUSE". It will help you:

- Burn more calories
- Lose weight easier
- Feel less hunger
- Have better skin
- Be much healthier
- Keep the weight off

And this great list of glycemic foods makes it simple. It's your road map and health guideline for easily finding your way through the confusing high and low glycemic carbohydrates maze.

As part of an overall nutritious food plan, avoid the overweight "FOODS TO REFUSE" that are too high in unhealthy fat calories and cause an unwanted insulin response. And go with moderate amounts of the healthy weight "FOODS TO CHOOSE." It's that simple!

http://commonsensehealth.com/Diet-and-Nutrition/List_of_Glycemic_Foods_Index_of_Healthy_Foods.shtml

List of Glycemic Foods Index of Healthy Foods

This list of glycemic foods index for good health is based on research from the Stanford Center for Research in Disease Prevention.

Research consultants, Arianna Carughi, Ph.D., C.N.S. and Gene Spiller, Ph.D., C.N.S., designed the perfect glycemic foods index list of glycemic foods for optimum health, weight loss and blood sugar levels.

These two simple categories of glycemic foods make choosing easier.

- "Foods to Refuse" are high glycemic and/or unhealthy.
- "Foods to Choose" are healthy low glycemic foods.

Protein Foods To Choose

Choose these foods baked, broiled, grilled or steamed.

Beef, ground (<10% fat)	Mussels
Beef, lean cuts	Octopus
Calamari	Oysters
Chicken, skinless	Pork, trimmed
Clams	Rabbit
Crabs	Scallops
Fish, (fresh or frozen)	Shrimp
Fish, (canned in water)	Tofu
Ham, lean	Tuna, (canned in water)
Lamb, lean	Turkey
Lobster	Venison

Protein Foods To Refuse

Refuse breaded, fried, deep fried or sauteed foods.

Bacon	Jerky (beef/turkey)
Beef, fatty cuts	Liver
Beef, ground (>10% fat)	Liverwurst
Canadian bacon	Pepperoni
Chicken (fried and/or with skin)	Salami
Chicken (buffalo wings)	Sausage
Duck	Seafood (canned in oil)
Fish sticks	Turkey bacon
Hot dogs (pork, beef, turkey, chicken)	Turkey sausage

Vegetables To Choose

Choose baked, boiled, broiled, raw or steamed.

Artichokes (and hearts)	Okra
Asparagus	Olives
Bamboo shoots	Onion
Bean sprouts	Palm hearts
Beans (green, wax)	Peas
Bok choy	Peppers (all types)
Broccoli	Pickles (dill)
Cabbage	Purslane
Carrots, raw	Radishes
Cauliflower	Rutabagas
Celery	Snow Peas
Chilies	Soybeans
Cucumbers	Squash (all except pumkin)
Eggplant	Tomato sauce, paste

Greens (spinach, chard, kale)	Tomatoes
Jicama	Water chestnuts
Leeks	Zucchini
Lettuce	Soup (broth & listed veggies)
Mushrooms	

Vegetables To Refuse

Avoid breaded, fried, deep fried or sauteed foods.

Avocados	Pickles (sweet)
Beets	Potatoes(all types)
Carrots (cooked)	Pumpkin
Corn	Sweet potatoes
Olives (packed in oil)	Sweet relish
Parsnips	Yams

Fruits To Choose

Apple	Orange
Apricots	Palmello
Blueberries	Papaya
Blackberries	Peach
Cantaloupe	Pear
Cherries	Pineapple
Grapefruit	Plum
Grapes (all types)	Raspberries
Honeydew	Strawberries
Kiwi	Tangelo
Melon	Tangerine
Nectarine	Watermelon

Fruits To Refuse

Bananas	Fruit sauces
Candied fruit	Mangoes
Coconut	Marmalade
Dates	Persimmons
Dried fruit	Plantains
Fruit juices	Raisins
Fruit preserves	

Breads & Cereals To Choose

100% sprouted wheat	Whole grain
100% whole wheat	Unsweetened bran cereals
Multi-grain	Muesli (low fat, no sugar added)

Oat bran bread	Oat bran
Pita, whole wheat	Oats, oatmeal
Pumpernickel	Puffed wheat (unsweetened)
Rye	Rice bran

Breads & Cereals To Refuse

Bagels (all types)	English muffins
Biscuits	Granola (all types)
Bread (except those on "Choose" list)	Melba toast
Bread crumbs	Muffins (all types)
Bread sticks	Pancakes
Cakes	Pastries (all types)
Cereal (except those on "Choose" list)	Pita bread (white)
Chips (all types)	Popcorn
Cookies	Popcorn cakes
Cornbread	Rice cakes
Crackers (all types)	Rolls (dinner, hamburger buns, etc.)
Croissants	Tortillas (except whole wheat)
Donuts	Waffles

Starchy Foods To Choose

Barley	Lentils
Beans (black, kidney, red, garbanzo, etc.)	Oats, oatmeal
Buckwheat	Pasta, whole wheat
Bulgur	Peas (split, black-eyed)
Chickpeas	Rice (basmati, bulgur, brown, wild)
Couscous	Tabouli
Dahl	

Starchy Foods To Refuse

Beans (baked, refried)	Pretzels
Granola (all types)	Rice (white, fried, spanish)
Noodles, ramen-style	Soups(all types except vegetable broth)
Pasta (white, green, red)	Taco shells
Potatoes (all types)	

Dairy Foods To Choose

Cheese (fat free or low fat)	Mozzarella cheese (fat free)
Cottage cheese (low fat)	Ricotta cheese (fat free)
Eggs, egg whites (no added fat)	Tempeh
Egg substitute	Tofu
Milk (1% low fat, fat free)	Yogurt (low fat, fat free, sugar free)

Dairy Foods To Refuse

Cheese (except those on "Choose" list)	Milk (whole, 2% fat)
Cottage cheese (full fat)	Mozzarella (full fat)
Cream / half & half	Sorbet (all types)
Cream cheese (all types)	Sour cream (full fat)
Frozen yogurt	Yogurt (full fat)
Ice cream	

Beverages To Choose

Water (mineral, sparkling, sugar-free)	Sugar-free beverages
Bouillon	Hot cocoa (sugar free, fat free)
Coffee (no sugar, fat free milk)	Tea(all types, no sugar)
Diet soda	

Beverages To Refuse

Alcohol (beer, wine, mixed drinks)
Beverages with sugar, high fructose corn syrup or other caloric sweeteners

Sweets & Treats To Choose

Diet soda	Sugar free popsicles
Sugar free gelatin	Sugar free pudding
Non-nutritive natural or artificial sweeteners	

Sweets & Treats To Refuse

Candy bars	Molasses
Chocolates	Frozen treats (with sugar)
Honey	Soda (with sugar)
Jam/jelly	Syrup (all types)
Marmalade	Tofu frozen dessert

Condiments To Choose

Butter (1 pat per day)	Olives (packed in water)
Butter substitute (1 pat per day)	Onion
Garlic	Parmesan cheese (1 Tbsp./day)
Ginger	Romano cheese (1 Tbsp./day)
Herbs	Pickles (dill)
Horseradish	Salad dressing (lo-cal, fat free)
Hummus	Salsa (4 Tbsp./day)
Ketchup (1 Tbsp./day)	Sauerkraut

Lemon juice	Shallots
Lime juice	Sour cream(low fat, fat free)
Margarine (1 pat per day)	Soy sauce
Mayonnaise (light/fat-free, 1 Tbsp/day)	Spaghetti sauce (sugar-free)
Mustard (lo-cal)	Spices (all)
Oil (olive)	Tahini sauce

Condiments To Refuse

Bacon bits	Salad dressings (full fat)
Croutons	Sandwich spreads
Lard	Seeds (sunflower, pumpkin, etc.)
Mayonanaise (full fat)	Shortening (vegetable)
Olives (packed in oil)	Sour cream (full fat)
Peanut butter	Sweet pickle relish
Pickles (except dill)	

- Choosing wisely from this list of glycemic foods index of healthy foods can help you to achieve all of your health, fitness and weight goals.

NOTE: Go to this website, click on the link to the recipe you like and you will get the details.

<http://www.the-gi-diet.org/recipes/>

GI Diet Recipes

Here is a selection of fully illustrated low GI recipes for you to choose from. They are perfect for anyone following a low glycemic index diet such as the GI Diet or the South Beach Diet.



Tuna Steak with Apricot Compote

A tender tuna steak served with a savoury compote made from apricots and tomatoes.

Roasted Mushroom and Lentil Cakes

Chestnut mushroom and lentils roasted with a selection of herbs and spices. Perfect for vegetarians.



Lemon and Parsley Chicken

These chicken parcels have an exciting tang to them and make a great healthy meal anytime of the year.

Grilled Dill Salmon with Olive Sauce

This simple recipe brings out the natural flavours of the salmon.



Chicken and Chickpea Casserole

A satisfying and healthy casserole, cooked slowly so as not to impair the flavors.

Vegetarian Chocolate Chili

A vegetarian mixed bean chili recipe spiced up in a Mexican style by the addition of cocoa powder. A dish you simply must try!



Banana and Nut Cookies

These soft and succulent cookies have a consistency half way between cake and cookies. The banana gives each cookie a moist and fruity flavor.

Chocolate Mousse with Raspberries

A deliciously light chocolate dessert containing only 145 calories.



Lemon Sponge Cake

A slice of this sponge cake makes a nice afternoon snack or a tasty desert after a low GI meal, this version has the added excitement of a lemony flavor.

Pork, Apple and Sage Soup

This soup presents a classic combination of pork and apple but in a soup form, producing a deliciously rewarding meal.



Carrot and Barley Soup

This heart warming soup is satisfyingly rich and creamy despite containing little fat.

Tuscan Pasta Bake

This convenient pasta bake recipe makes use of the borlotti beans popular in the Italian region of Tuscany. A healthy vegetarian meal that takes only 5 minutes preparation work, then you can relax whilst it cooks itself.



Lentil Chicken Curry

A beautiful, full flavoured curry made with chicken and red lentils. This low fat, low GI recipe is easy to make and a true taste of India.

Banana Smoothie

A surprisingly sweet but healthy banana smoothie that has no added sugar and has a low glycemic index.



Spiced Apricot Turkey

A tender moist and spicy turkey breast packed with dried apricots for a beautiful fruity flavour.

Jamaican Cashew Baked Apples

Juicy apples baked with a rum and cashew nuts. A great simple recipe for cold winter days.



Simple Tomato Basil Soup

A sweet and fresh tomato soup recipe with a real thick substance to it.

Bean and Beef Burgers

Nothing quite compares to a moist, juicy home made beef burger. Even better these burgers are low fat and low GI, with kidney beans added for flavor and their healthy properties.



Spiced Vegetable Omelette

A delicious meal in minutes and only one pan to clean, this is the perfect option if you are want a GI diet meal in a hurry.

Saucy Chickpeas and Sweet Potato

If you want a really filling, low GI meal suitable for vegetarians, then you will love this baked sweet potato stuffed with chickpeas.



Red Wine Beef Stew

This warming stew is perfect for cold wintery days. Guaranteed to warm your cockles.

Puy Lentil Quinoa

A simple hot protein rich meal made with the nutritional super food quinoa.



Vegetable Ratatouille

A heathy Italian vegetable dish served with pasta.

Italian Sauce with Bacon and Pasta

This pasta dish with an Italian style tomato sauce is ready in 15 minutes and is a real help for all those short on time but looking to eat healthily or lose weight.



Soy French Toast with Peaches

An ideal use for stale bread and a quick hot breakfast.

Puffed Rice Breakfast Bar

These home made breakfast squares provide a quick morning meal on the go.



Almond Pancakes & Berries

These pancakes don't taste much different to their higher glycemic index version and provide a substantial balanced meal to start your day.

Chinese Clay Pot Vegetables

A dish inspired by food from China, this healthy vegetable stir fry will give you a vitamin packed meal in minutes.



No Bake Pineapple & Berry Cheese Cake

A high protein, low fat, low GI cheese cake that tastes great. I loved this recipe so much I ate it for breakfast too.



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