

The Glycaemic Index

Nutrition & Dietetics Department



Patient information leaflet

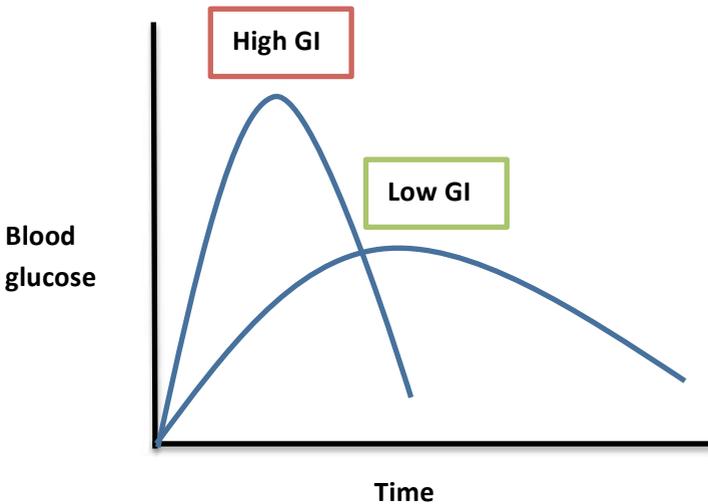
Who is this leaflet for and what does it cover?

This leaflet tells you about the glycaemic index and how to practically apply the principles to your diet.

What is the Glycaemic Index (GI)?

The GI is a ranking of foods based on their overall effect on blood glucose levels. Slowly absorbed foods have a low GI rating, foods that are more quickly absorbed have a higher rating.

The diagram below shows how lower GI foods can help stabilise blood glucose levels and reduce the body's insulin response.



Do other factors affect the GI of foods?

There are many factors which affect the GI of a food. These include type of sugar or starch, ripeness, processing, preparation, cooking methods, fibre, fat and protein content.

Remember:

- LOW GI does **NOT** always = HEALTHY
- HIGH GI does **NOT** always = UNHEALTHY

E.g. a chocolate bar can be low GI due to the high fat content.

Is there a detailed list of GI values?

Low GI options can be found for each of the 5 food groups, see the table below. You can also find lists on the internet and in books. Try to avoid making GI too complicated. Just aim to have a balanced diet and then adapt your starchy choice to a low GI, high fibre option where possible.

Low GI (55 or less)	Medium GI (56-69)	High GI (70 or more)
Breads		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Burgen bread® (Soya & Linseed)■ Wholegrain/multigrain/granary■ Fruit loaf■ Rye bread■ Sourdough■ Pumpernickel■ Breads made from chickpea flour e.g. chapattis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Wholemeal■ Pita bread■ Crumpet■ Cream crackers■ Oat cakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Bagel■ Baguette■ White

Low GI (55 or less)	Medium GI (56-69)	High GI (70 or more)
Cereals		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All-Bran® ■ Muesli ■ Porridge ■ Hot oatmeal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Just Right® ■ Special K® ■ Weetabix® ■ Instant porridge ■ Shredded wheat® 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Cheerio's® ■ Coco pops® ■ Cornflakes®
Grains		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Brown rice ■ Brown, basmati rice ■ Long grain rice ■ Pasta (durum wheat) ■ Spaghetti/Noodles ■ Quinoa ■ Bulgar ■ Noodles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ White, basmati rice ■ Couscous ■ Rice noodles ■ Gnocchi ■ Risotto rice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Instant pasta/rice ■ White rice
Vegetables & Legumes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Sweet potato, peeled and boiled ■ Yam ■ Baked beans ■ Lentils/ Pulses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Canned potato ■ New potato, unpeeled and boiled ■ Beetroot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Baked potato ■ Mashed potato/ Instant mash ■ Parsnips
Fruit		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Apples, Banana, Cherries, Orange, Pear, Peach, Mango, blueberries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Apricots, Pineapple, Raisins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Watermelon

What is the Glycaemic load (GL)?

GL provides a value for foods combining the effect they have on blood sugar (GI) plus their portion size. If you are eating a high GI food keep the portion size very small to limit the effect on blood sugar.

Tips for low GI diet

- Include a low GI starchy carbohydrate with each meal
- Use breakfast cereals based on oats, barley or bran
- Use wholegrain breads
- Avoid large portion sizes of potatoes
- Have all types of fruit and vegetables
- Use basmati rice
- Have pasta and noodles but be aware of portion size
- Include a low fat protein with each of your meals

Add acidic dressing such as vinaigrette to salads and avoid high fat mayonnaises and dressings.

Example meal plan

Breakfast:

- Porridge made with skimmed or semi-skimmed milk
- Granary toast with half a can baked beans/poached egg

Snack meal:

- Sandwich made with granary bread or
- Soup made with beans / lentils and seeded wholegrain roll
- Wholemeal pasta salad with low fat cheese
- Fruit/yoghurt

Main meal:

- Homemade curry with basmati rice
- 80g Wholemeal pasta with chicken and vegetables
- Baked sweet potato
- Cottage pie

Reference sources

- Dr. Jennie Brand-Miller et al, (2015) Make healthy carb choices easy with the shopper's guide 2015, Hachette, Australia
- www.glycemicindex.com
- www.gisymbol.com
- www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/GIDiet.pdf

The information in this leaflet was correct at time of writing.

Please note that product changes are not the responsibility of the author.

If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet please contact your GP or Consultant and ask to be referred to a Registered Dietitian.

Contact details

For further information or advice please contact us.

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PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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