

# The Glycemic Index

This document reflects our  
**CPG**  
Clinical Practice Guidelines

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**Canadian Diabetes Association**

## What is the Glycemic Index of food?

The Glycemic Index (GI) is a scale that ranks carbohydrate-rich foods by how much they raise blood glucose levels compared to a standard food. The standard food is glucose or white bread.

## Why should I eat foods with a low Glycemic Index?

Eating foods with a low Glycemic Index may help you to:

- ◆ Control your blood glucose level
- ◆ Control your cholesterol level
- ◆ Control your appetite
- ◆ Lower your risk of getting heart disease
- ◆ Lower your risk of getting type 2 diabetes

## Use these meal planning ideas to include the Glycemic Index as part of healthy eating.

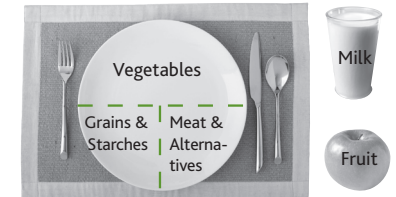
- ◆ Enjoy vegetables, fruits and low-fat milk products with your meals. These are carbohydrate-rich foods that, in general, have low glycemic index.
- ◆ Plan your meals with foods in the **low and medium** Glycemic Index starch choices on the list that follows.
- ◆ Try foods such as barley, bulgar, couscous, or lentils, which have a low Glycemic Index.
- ◆ Consult a registered dietitian for help with choosing low GI foods, adapting recipes, and other ways to incorporate low GI foods in your meal plan.

## If I eat foods with a low Glycemic Index can I eat as much as I want?

**No.** Using the Glycemic Index to choose foods is only one part of healthy eating.

Healthy eating also means:

- ◆ Eating at regular times
- ◆ Choosing a variety of foods from all food groups
- ◆ Limiting sugars and sweets
- ◆ Reducing the amount of fat you eat
- ◆ Including foods high in fibre
- ◆ Limiting salt, alcohol and caffeine



**Remember that checking your blood glucose before and 2 hours after a meal is the best way to know how your body handles the meal.**

A lot of starchy foods have a high Glycemic Index (GI). Choose medium and low GI foods more often.

<b>LOW GI (55 OR LESS) * †</b> Choose most often ✓✓✓	<b>MEDIUM GI (56-69) * †</b> Choose more often ✓✓	<b>HIGH GI (70 OR MORE) * †</b> Choose less often ✓
<b>BREADS:</b> 100% stone ground whole wheat Heavy mixed grain Pumpernickel	<b>BREADS:</b> Whole wheat Rye Pita	<b>BREADS:</b> White bread Kaiser roll Bagel, white
<b>CEREAL:</b> All Bran™ Bran Buds with Psyllium™ Oat Bran™	<b>CEREAL:</b> Grapenuts™ Puffed wheat Oatmeal Quick oats	<b>CEREAL:</b> Bran flakes Corn flakes Rice Krispies™
<b>GRAINS:</b> Barley Bulgar Pasta/noodles Parboiled or converted rice	<b>GRAINS:</b> Basmati rice Brown rice Couscous	<b>GRAINS:</b> Short-grain rice
<b>OTHER:</b> Sweet potato Yam Legumes Lentils Chickpeas Kidney beans Split peas Soy beans Baked beans	<b>OTHER:</b> Potato, new/white Sweet corn Popcorn Stoned Wheat Thins™ Ryvita™ (rye crisps) Black bean soup Green pea soup	<b>OTHER:</b> Potato, baking (Russet) French fries Pretzels Rice cakes Soda crackers

One change I will make **now** is:

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\*expressed as a percentage of the value for glucose † Canadian values where available

Adapted with permission from: Foster-Powell K, Holt SHA, Brand-Miller JC. International table of glycemic index and glycemic load values Am J Clin Nutr. 2002;76:5-56