

# The Glycemic Index - Cherubino Health Center Information

## About the Glycemic Index

The Glycemic Index (GI) relates to the way your body's sugar levels respond to certain types of food. Foods are given a rating from 0 –100 on the glycemic index with glucose in the highest position. High Glycemic Index foods (such as simple carbohydrates) will increase the body's sugar levels rapidly whereas low glycemic index foods (such as higher-fiber complex carbohydrates) will increase the body's sugar levels slowly. A good understanding of the glycemic index can assist in blood glucose management, weight loss and diabetes.

## How Does the Glycemic Index work?

The glycemic index is somewhat complicated and cannot be universally generalized for all people. Simply put, different people will have different reactions to different foods. The body's response to various foods will be influenced by numerous factors including;

- age
- organ health
- activity level
- insulin levels
- time of day
- amount of fiber and fat in a particular food
- the make up of foods that are consumed during the same meal
- how refined or processed a food is

Other factors include how a food was prepared (e.g. boiled compared to fried or baked) together with an individual's metabolism, will ultimately determine the way a person's sugar levels will respond to the food they have eaten. Foods that have a low glycemic index will have little immediate effect on the body's sugar levels. Comparatively, foods that have a high glycemic index will have an instant affect on blood sugar levels. Ratings on the glycemic index have resulted from numerous studies; however, individuals should test their own reactions to food in relation to the glycemic index.

## The Glycemic Index and Food

Foods low on the glycemic index will release glucose gradually into the blood stream whereas foods high on the glycemic index will provoke an immediate response in the blood sugar levels. Foods that contain mostly carbohydrates are usually high on the glycemic index and have the greatest effect on blood sugars. Pasta dishes, bread and potatoes are therefore highest on the glycemic index. And remember that composition of the carbohydrate is all-important and will effect how the body's sugar levels react. Therefore, white bread will rate high on the glycemic index whereas certain types of wholegrain or rye bread will be rated lower on the glycemic index as they contain more complex carbohydrates together with higher fiber, vitamins and minerals. Examples of low glycemic foods are breakfast cereals that contain higher fiber and greater amounts of complex sugars. Examples of high glycemic foods are white bread, soft drinks, ice cream, chocolate bars etc.

## The Glycemic Index and Dieting

Some health experts and dieticians contend that the glycemic index is too difficult to use because it is complicated and will vary from person to person. This is why at Cherubino Health Center we recommend the use of the glycemic index as part of a whole health approach which includes professional nutritional evaluation and an appropriate follow-up treatment program. In this way the glycemic index becomes a useful meal-planning tool especially when individuals monitor their own individual responses to specific foods.

A working knowledge of low glycemic foods can be especially helpful in assisting those who want to lose weight or for people who are trying to manage or overcome diabetes. Low glycemic index foods will increase the glucose levels in the blood stream to sustain energy levels for longer periods of time. Also, a good understanding of the glycemic index will also assist with exercise. For anyone interested in maintaining healthy blood glucose levels, the glycemic index can be a valuable tool in understanding and managing your daily food intake.

# Glycemic Index

## Glycemic Index of Grains

Buckwheat 54  
Bulgur 48  
Basmati Rice 58  
Brown Rice 55  
Long grain White Rice 56  
Short grain White Rice 72  
Uncle Ben's Converted 44  
Noodles (instant) 46  
Taco Shells 68

## Glycemic Index of Fruit

Apple 38  
Banana 55  
Cantaloupe 65  
Cherries 22  
Grapefruit 25  
Grapes 46  
Kiwi 52  
Mango 55  
Orange 44  
Papaya 58  
Pear 38  
Pineapple 66  
Plum 39  
Watermelon 100

## Glycemic Index of Vegetables

Beets 69  
Broccoli 10  
Cabbage 10  
Carrots 49  
Corn 55  
Green Peas 48  
Lettuce 10  
Mushrooms 10  
Onions 10  
Parsnips 97  
Potato (baked) 93  
Potato (mashed, instant) 86  
Potato (new) 62  
Potato (french fries) 75  
Red Peppers 10  
Pumpkin 75  
Sweet Potato 54  
Yam 37



Limiting your intake of high glycemic index (GI) foods has been shown to be beneficial in controlling blood sugar levels.

The index is useful in helping you determine how quickly a food enters the bloodstream and raises your blood glucose levels.

We recommend replacing high glycemic foods with low and moderate glycemic foods as a first step to favorably affecting sugar levels in general.

**High GI Foods** = GI of 70+ (*avoid whenever possible*)

**Medium GI Foods** = GI of 55 to 69 (*use with caution and avoid when possible*)

**Low GI Foods** = GI of 0 to 54 (*eat these foods as your preferred source*)



## Glycemic Index of Legumes/

### Beans

Baked Beans 48  
Broad Beans 79  
Cannellini Beans 31  
Garbanzo Beans (Chickpeas) 33  
Lentils 30  
Lima Beans 32  
Navy Beans 38  
Pinto Beans 39  
Red Kidney Beans 27  
Soy Beans 18  
White Beans 31

## Glycemic Index of Pasta

Spaghetti 43  
Ravioli (meat) 39  
Fettuccini (egg) 32  
Spiral Pasta 43  
Linguine 46  
Macaroni 47  
Rice vermicelli 58

## Glycemic Index of Nuts and Seeds

Cashews 22  
Peanuts 18  
Almonds 10  
Sunflower Seeds 15  
Pumpkin Seeds 12

## Glycemic Index of Sugars

Fructose 35  
Glucose 100  
Honey 58  
Lactose 46  
Maltose 100  
Sucrose 65

## Glycemic Index of Breakfast Cereals

Kellogg's All Bran 51  
Kellogg's Bran Buds 45  
Kellogg's Cornflakes 84  
Kellogg's Rice Krispies 82  
Kellogg's Special K 54  
Oatmeal 49  
Shredded Wheat 67  
Quaker Puffed Wheat 67

## Glycemic Index of Cookies & Crackers

Graham Crackers 74  
Kavli Crispbread 71  
Melba Toast 70  
Oatmeal Cookies 55  
Rice Cakes 82  
Rice Crackers 91  
Ryvita Crispbread 69  
Soda Crackers 74  
Shortbread Cookies 64  
Stoned Wheat Thins 67  
Vanilla Wafers  
Water crackers 78

## Glycemic Index of Dairy Foods

Milk (whole) 22  
Milk (skimmed) 32  
Milk (chocolate flavored) 34  
Ice Cream (whole) 61  
Ice cream (low-fat) 50  
Yogurt (low-fat) 33

