

## Glycaemic Index

### What is it?

- A ranking of carbohydrate containing foods based on the overall effect they have on blood glucose levels.
- Slowly absorbed foods cause a gradual rise in blood sugar levels and therefore have a **low GI** rating.
- Foods that are more quickly absorbed, increase blood glucose levels more rapidly and have a **higher GI** rating.

### Are low GI foods healthier?

Using the GI Index alone to decide whether foods are healthy can be misleading. Some low GI foods are healthy, others may be high in fat and calories and should be eaten in moderation. Similarly, not all high GI foods are unhealthy e.g. Watermelon and Parsnips are high GI foods, while chocolate cake has a lower GI value. Choosing foods solely on the basis of their GI value without regard to their content of energy, saturated fat, salt or sugar is unlikely to result in a healthy diet and could lead to weight gain. Cooking, processing, ripeness, wholegrains, high fibre, fat and protein are all factors that can affect the GI of a food.

### Can low GI foods help me lose weight?

Low GI foods which cause your blood sugar levels to rise and fall slowly may help you feel fuller for longer, controlling your appetite, so lower GI foods can help manage weight if eaten as part of a calorie controlled diet.

## TIPS OF THE WEEK

Simple ideas to include low-GI carbs in everyday meals as a balanced diet:

### BREAKFAST

- Try porridge, natural muesli or wholegrain breakfast cereals
- Add sliced fruit to wholegrain breakfast cereals

### LUNCH

- Add baked beans to your jacket potato and serve with a large green salad
- Try a bean based or vegetable soup
- Choose granary, pumpernickel or rye bread instead of white and wholemeal bread

### EVENING MEAL

- Use new or sweet potatoes instead of old potatoes
- Choose basmati or easy cook rice, pasta or noodles, quinoa or bulgur wheat
- Eat wholemeal roti and include dhal in your meals
- Swap frozen chips for pasta or noodles
- Include more beans and lentils in your meal

## Did you know!

The amount of carbohydrate you eat has a bigger effect on blood glucose levels than GI alone. The **'Glycaemic Load' (GL)** takes into account the Glycaemic Index (GI) of a food and the amount of carbohydrate in a standardised portion (100g), giving you a more accurate measure of the impact of a food on blood sugars. For example, looking at the GI values of pasta and watermelon you might expect that a typical portion of watermelon would affect your blood glucose levels more than pasta. This is not the case because pasta contains considerably more carbohydrate per portion than watermelon.

$$\text{Glycaemic load} = \frac{\text{GI} \times \text{g of carbohydrate}}{100}$$

## Carbohydrate content, Kcals and GI of Foods

### HIGH GI FOODS >70

Food	Portion Size	Glycaemic Index	Carb per portion	Kcals per portion
Parsnip	2 tbsp (65g)	97	8	43
Rice cakes	1 (8g)	85	26	28
White Bread	1 large slice (38g)	70	18	85
Watermelon	1 slice (200g)	72	14	62
Cornflakes	1 small bowl (30g)	84	26	108
Baked Potato	1 medium (180g)	85	22	94

### MODERATE GI FOODS (56-69)

Food	Portion Size	Glycaemic Index	Carb per portion	Kcals per portion
Digestive Biscuit	1 (15g)	59	10	71
Apricots	1 (40g)	57	3	12
Boiled new potatoes	7 small (175g)	62	27	116
Weetabix	2 (40g)	69	30	141
Wholemeal bread	1 large slice (38g)	69	16	82
Muesli Bar	1 (33g)	61	20	154
Sweet potato	1 medium (130g)	54	27	209

### LOW GI FOODS <55

Food	Portion Size	Glycaemic Index	Carb per portion	Kcals per portion
Peanuts	1 handful (50g)	14	4	301
Full Fat milk	Half pint (300ml)	27	14	198
Apples	1 (100g)	38	12	47
Red Kidney Beans	4 tbsp (120g)	27	20	124
Milk Chocolate	1 bar (54g)	49	31	281
Porridge with water	1 small bowl (160g)	42	14	78
Pasta-Noodles	4 tbsp (230g)	46	30	143
Carrots	2 tbsp (60g)	49	3	14

For more information on the Glycaemic Index see [NHS Choices Website -Glycaemic Index](#)