

Understanding the Glycaemic Index

The Glycaemic Index (GI) is a numerical system, ranging from 1 to 100, used to measure how quickly carbohydrate-containing foods cause an increase in blood sugar levels. Carbohydrates can vary in the speed at which they are broken down during digestion—some are metabolized rapidly, others more gradually. The GI value is determined by comparing a food's effect on blood sugar to a standard benchmark, typically white bread or pure glucose.

Assigned the maximum GI value of 100, white bread and glucose are benchmarks because they prompt a swift and significant elevation in blood sugar, more so than most other food items.

Incorporating predominantly low to medium GI foods in your diet is advisable for numerous health benefits, such as:

- Stabilizing blood sugar levels
- Managing levels of cholesterol
- Keeping hunger at bay
- Diminishing the likelihood of heart disease
- Reducing the chance of type 2 diabetes onset

Below is a classification of foods based on their GI values, along with examples:

Low GI (55 or under):

- Yams, sweet potatoes
- Rice that's been parboiled.
- Dense grain breads, such as those with mixed grains, pumpernickel, or made with stone-ground flour.
- Oats that are steel cut
- Quinoa
- A variety of beans including lentils, chickpeas, kidney beans, and navy beans
- Dairy products like milk and yogurt
- Legumes such as chickpeas, lentils, and split peas
- Fruits like apples, oranges, strawberries, and plums
- Numerous vegetables including carrots, broccoli, tomatoes, cauliflower, peppers, and green beans.

Medium GI (56 to 70):

- Potatoes when baked or turned into French fries.
- Varieties of rice such as brown and wild
- Breads like rye, whole wheat, and pita
- Cereals made from shredded wheat.
- Oats that are quick to cook
- Couscous

- Snacks like popcorn and rye crispbread
- Soups made from black beans or green peas.
- Fruits such as cantaloupe, raisins, mangoes, bananas, and pineapple

High GI (above 70):

- Instant varieties of white rice
- Breads such as white and bagels
- Cereals based on bran flakes.
- Oatmeal that's instant or cream of wheat.
- Sweets including cookies and cakes.
- Snack foods like pretzels and soda crackers.
- Treats such as donuts
- Fruits like dried dates and watermelon
- Vegetables such as parsnips and pumpkin

Aiming for a diet rich in foods with a low to medium GI can be a strategic move towards sustaining overall health and wellness.