

Glycemic Index

*What in the world is it?
And why should it matter to you?*

Let's start with how to pronounce this big word first.

Gly-see-mik. It relates to the sugar (glucose) level in your blood. The glycemic index (GI) measures how high and how fast your blood sugar spikes after you eat a specific type and amount of food compared to consuming the same amount of pure sugar.

The carbohydrates in some foods (high GI foods), like white rice, bread and potatoes, can spike blood sugar higher and faster like sugar, whereas lower glycemic foods, like nuts, lentils and broccoli, have a slower, steadier effect. If a food has a 35 percent GI, like a serving of kidney beans, it means it boosts blood sugar only 35 percent as much as pure sugar does. Another food may have a 90 percent GI, like a serving of a flavored sports drink, which is high enough to act like pure sugar in the bloodstream.

How to gauge GI values

Glycemic Index	Value	Foods with this GI value
Low GI	55 or less	Most fruits, most vegetables, beans, low-processed grains, nuts, low-fat dairy
Medium GI	56 - 69	White potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, white rice, cereals (Cream of Wheat or wheat squares)
High GI	70+	White bread, rice cakes, most crackers, bagels, doughnuts, cakes, other sweets

Why GI matters

Left unchecked, high blood sugar can lead to serious health concerns like diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. Eating foods with low GI values can mean a slower rise in blood sugar, and help you control your weight and maintain better health. Foods with a lower GI value can help curb cravings for unhealthy foods and keep you feeling satisfied longer. If you are concerned about a health issue and how to prevent or manage it, work with your doctor on the right eating plan for you.

Simple swaps for better blood sugar

Swap this higher GI food	For this lower GI food
White rice	Brown rice
Oatmeal (flavored, instant)	Steel-cut oats with fresh fruit
Corn flakes	Bran flakes
Spaghetti	Vegetable noodles (Zoodles)
White bread	Whole grain bread
Corn	Peas, leafy greens, peppers, broccoli, cauliflower



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