

NUTRITION

WEIGHT LOSS AND WEIGHT MANAGEMENT BASED ON GLYCEMIC INDEX (GI) OF FOODS

What is the basis of the “GI diet” and how will it help me to lose weight?

When you consume a food that has a high glycemic index, it is broken down rapidly by your digestive system and results in a spike in sugar (glucose) into your bloodstream. Insulin is then released rapidly which results in the glucose disappearing quickly, leaving you wanting to eat more. The surge of glucose followed by the rapid drain may leave you feeling hungry and lacking energy, resulting in the need for another meal or snack.

There is another reason why the consumption of foods that have a high glycemic index makes weight loss difficult. It blocks the breakdown of body fat. Eating foods that have a low glycemic index helps to limit fat formation.

Creating a weight loss meal plan based on the glycemic index of foods allows you to eat foods from all food groups and encourages you to include protein-containing foods into meals and snacks that contain healthy fats or which limit the “bad” fats.

The recommended low glycemic index foods are divided into food groups – choose these foods for your meals and snacks.

The following lists are your guide to the foods to include into meals and snacks, which foods to rarely choose and which foods to avoid.

FRUITS

Choose – apples, blackberries, blueberries, cherries, grapefruit, grapes, lemons, oranges, mandarin oranges, peaches, plums, pears, raspberries, strawberries, unsweetened applesauce, unsweetened canned peaches in their own juice or in water, unsweetened canned pears in their own juice or in water

Limit – apricots, bananas, kiwi, mangoes, papaya, pineapple, unsweetened fruit cocktail in its own juice, dried fruit

Avoid – cantaloupe, dates, honeydew melon, prunes, raisins, watermelon, all canned fruit in light or heavy syrup, sweetened applesauce

FRUIT JUICES

**Should be limited or avoided – it’s recommended that we eat our fruit rather than drink it!*

Limit – unsweetened apple, orange, grapefruit, pear and pineapple juices

Avoid – all fruit “drinks”, all sweetened juices, prune juice, watermelon juice

VEGETABLES

Choose – asparagus, beans (green/wax), peppers (sweet/bell), broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, leeks, lettuce (all varieties), mushrooms, onions, peas, hot peppers, pickles (note that these are high in salt), radishes, snow peas, spinach, tomatoes, zucchini

Limit – artichokes, beets, corn, olives, potatoes (boiled, and boiled new potatoes), pumpkin, squash

Avoid – broad beans, French fries, hash browns, parsnips, instant potatoes, mashed or baked potatoes, sweet potatoes, turnip, yams

BEANS

Choose – black-eyed peas, chickpeas, kidney beans, lentils, lima beans, navy beans, pinto beans, soybeans, split peas

Limit – canned baked beans, canned kidney beans, canned lentils

Avoid – broad beans, canned pork and beans

BREADS AND BREAD PRODUCTS

Choose – 100% stone ground whole grain and pumpernickel (use in single slice only per serving)

Limit – whole wheat pita, whole grain rye, sourdough bread, whole grain breads

Avoid – bagels, baguettes, croissants, cakes, cookies, corn bread, English muffins, hamburger and hotdog buns, Kaiser rolls, melba toast, muffins and doughnuts, pancakes and waffles, pizza, stuffing, tortillas, white bread

CEREALS

Choose – All Bran, Bran Buds, Fibre First, Oat Bran, large flake oatmeal, Red River cereal

Limit – Shredded Wheat

Avoid – all cold cereals except those in the “choose” and “limit” lists, above, granola, muesli (store bought)

GRAINS

Choose – barley, buckwheat, bulgur, the following rice – basmati, wild, brown, long-grain

Limit – corn

Avoid – the following rice – white, instant, short-grain

PASTA

**use whole wheat or protein-enriched varieties if available*

Choose – capellini, fettuccine, macaroni, penne, spaghetti, linguine, vermicelli

Limit – none....go to “Avoid” list

Avoid – all canned pastas, gnocci, macaroni and cheese, canned or instant noodles, ravioli with cheese and/or meat, tortellini with cheese and/or meat

PASTA SAUCES

Choose – sugar-free light sauces with vegetables

Limit – sugar-free sauces with vegetables

Avoid – sauces with added meat or cheese, sauces with added sugar or sucrose

SOUPS

Choose – chunky bean, vegetable and pasta soups (e.g., Campbell’s Healthy Request, Healthy Choice and Too Good To Be True)

Limit – chicken noodle, lentil, tomato

Avoid – all cream-based soups, black bean, green pea, pureed vegetable, split pea

DAIRY

Choose – skim milk, buttermilk, fat-free cheese, 1% or fat free cottage cheese, fat and sugar-free frozen yogurt, fat and sugar-free fruit yogurt, low-fat and sugar-free ice cream, light pudding mix made with skim milk

Limit – 1% milk, low-fat cheese, light cream cheese, low-fat ice cream, light sour cream, low-fat yogurt with sugar

Avoid – 2% or whole milk, chocolate milk, cheese, 2% or whole cottage cheese, cream, cream cheese, ice cream, sour cream, 2% or whole yogurt

MEAT, POULTRY, FISH AND EGGS

Choose – All non-breaded, non-coated fish (fresh, frozen, canned – in water), back bacon, lean cuts of beef, skinless chicken breast, extra lean ground beef, lean deli ham (high in sodium), omega-3 eggs, tofu, skinless turkey breast, veal

Limit – lean ground beef, lean cuts of lamb, lean cuts of pork, regular eggs (no more than 4 per week), turkey bacon (high in sodium)

Avoid – more than 10% fat ground beef, hamburgers, hot dogs, processed meats, regular bacon (side bacon), sausages (high in sodium)

FATS AND OILS

Choose – canola oil, olive oil, flax seed, fat-free mayonnaise, fat-free salad dressings, vegetable oil sprays,

Limit – corn oil, light mayonnaise, peanut oil, light salad dressings, sesame oil, sunflower oil, almonds, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, most nuts, light soft margarine and regular soft margarine (non-hydrogenated, in tub)

Avoid – butter, coconut oil, hard margarine (stick types), lard, regular mayonnaise, palm oil, regular salad dressings, vegetable shortening

BEVERAGES

Choose – decaffeinated soft drinks, water, club soda (contains sodium), decaffeinated coffee with skim milk and no sugar, light instant chocolate, tea with skim milk and no sugar

Limit – red wine, regular coffee, regular diet soft drinks

Avoid – regular soft drinks with sugar, alcoholic beverages



This document was adapted by Chris Fraser, registered dietician, from the Parkwood Institute, St. Joseph Health Care, London, Ontario. Adapted from: "The Glycemic Index Diet", written by Rick Gallop, former President and CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario

