

Glycemic Index Categories

GREEN = **LOW GI**
(55 or less)
Choose MOST Often

YELLOW = **MEDIUM GI**
(56 to 69)
Choose SOMETIMES

RED = **HIGH GI**
(70 or more)
Choose LEAST Often

Foods in the high GI category can be swapped with foods in the medium and/or low GI category.

Benefits of a low GI diet

- Decrease risk of type 2 diabetes.
- Help manage your blood sugar.
- Decrease risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Feel full longer.

Meal planning ideas

- Cook your pasta al dente (firm). Check your pasta package instructions for cooking time.
- Make foods and drinks such as fruits, and milk or alternatives part of your meal. These foods often have a low GI.
- Try lower GI grains, such as barley and bulgur.
- Swap half of your higher GI starch food serving with beans, lentils or chickpeas. For example, instead of having 1 cup of cooked short grain rice, have ½ cup of cooked rice mixed with ½ cup of black beans.

The **glycemic index (GI)** is a scale that ranks a carbohydrate-containing food or drink by how fast it raises blood sugar levels after a set amount is eaten. Foods with a high GI tend to increase blood sugar faster than foods with a low GI.

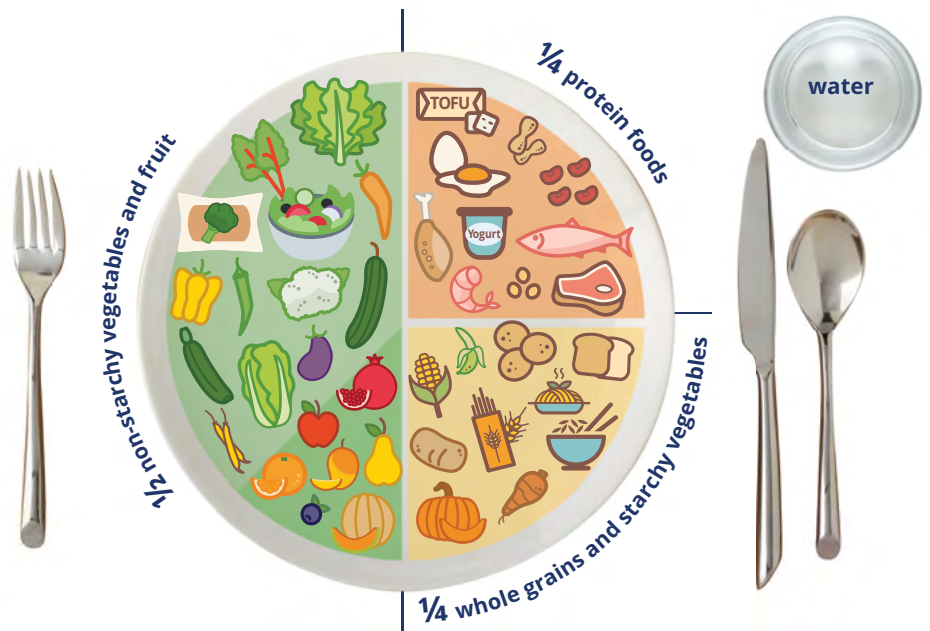
On top of the type of carbohydrate you choose, the quantity or serving size also has a role to play in managing your blood sugar. Even low GI foods need to be eaten in a specific amount or serving size to avoid a high blood sugar response.

The GI of the food can change based on the serving size eaten, cooking method and by combining the food with other ingredients in a meal or snack. By pairing a high GI food with a combination of non-starchy vegetables, lean protein and healthy fats at each meal or snack, you can reduce the overall glycemic response.

While this is a tool to help people living with diabetes better understand blood sugar changes in response to foods eaten, every body is different. You may find that some high GI foods do not impact your blood sugar as much while some low GI foods do!

The Balanced Plate Method

Using a standard dinner plate, follow this model for a balanced meal.



Some carbohydrate-containing foods and drinks have so little carbohydrate that they do not have a GI value. This means that they can be included as part of a healthy diet with little to no impact on blood sugar. Examples include animal based proteins, many vegetables, herbs, spices, lemons and limes. These foods are not included in the lists below but can be included in a balanced meal or snack.

Diabetes Canada recommends choosing lower GI foods and drinks more often to help control blood sugar. If possible, work with a Registered Dietitian to add foods and drinks to your lists, create action plans that include choosing lower GI foods, adapt your favourite recipes, and find ways to swap/substitute low GI foods into your meal plan.

Checking your blood sugar before, and 2 hours after a meal is the best way to know how your body handles certain foods and drinks.

Items marked with an * are foods to be enjoyed occasionally. Some items are ranked based on the average of multiple inputs from the International Tables of Glycemic Index & Glycemic Load. Reference provided below.

GRAINS & STARCHES		
Low Glycemic Index (55 or less) Choose MOST Often	Medium Glycemic Index (56 to 69) Choose LESS Often	High Glycemic Index (70 or more) Choose LEAST Often
<p>Breads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> English Muffin (Whole Wheat, Multigrain) Dosa (Foxtail Millet + Dhal) Idli (Brown rice + Dhal) Flaxseed/Linseed Bread Mixed Grain Heavy Breads Multigrain, Seeded Bread Pumpernickel Bread Sprouted Grain Bread Tortilla (Whole Wheat, White, Corn) <p>Cereal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All-Bran™ Cereal All-Bran Buds™ With Psyllium Cereal Red River Cereal Oats (Steel Cut) Oat Bran™ <p>Grains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adlay, Job's Tears, Chinese Barley (Boiled, Flaked) Barley Buckwheat Bulgur Chickpea flour Egg Noodles Kamut Mung Bean Noodles Pasta (Wheat - Al Dente, Firm) Pulse Flours Quinoa Rice (Brown) Rice (Wild) 	<p>Breads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapati (White, Whole Wheat) Gluten-free Bread (Sourdough, Buckwheat, Quinoa, Oat, Pulse) Milk Bread Oat Bread Paratha Pita Bread (White, Whole Wheat) Spelt Bread Sourdough (Whole Wheat, Rye) Roti (White, Whole Wheat) Rye Bread (Light, Dark, Whole Grain) Whole Grain Whole Wheat Bread <p>Cereal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All-Bran Flakes™ Cereal Cornmeal porridge Cream of Wheat™ (Regular) Granola Muesli Oats (Large Flake, Rolled, Old Fashioned) Oats (Quick) Raisin Bran™ Shredded Wheat™ <p>Grains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amaranth Cornmeal Couscous (Regular, Whole Wheat) Gluten Free Pasta Millet (Foxtail, Little, Kodo, Proso, Barnyard) Ramen Noodles (Fresh, Buckwheat, Whole Wheat) Rice (Basmati) Rice (Parboiled) Rice (Long Grain) Rice Noodles Soba (Buckwheat) Noodles Spelt Tapioca Teff Udon Noodles 	<p>Breads:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bread, Bagel, Baguette (White, Whole Wheat) Dosa (Rice Flour, Finger Millet + Dhal) English Muffin (White) Gluten-free Bread (White, Rice, Corn) Idli (White rice + Dhal) Matzo Naan (White, Whole Wheat) Rice Bread Rice Cakes Sourdough (White) <p>Cereal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheerios™ Cereal Corn Flakes™ Cereal Cream of Wheat™ (Instant) Puffed Wheat Cereal Rice Krispies™ Cereal Shredded Wheat™ Special K™ Cereal Oats (Instant) <p>Grains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Millet (Finger, Pearl) Ramen (Instant) Rice (Instant) Rice (Jasmine) Rice (Sticky, Sushi, Short Grain) Rice Porridge (Congee) Sorghum

GRAINS & STARCHES (continued)

Low Glycemic Index (55 or less) Choose MOST Often	Medium Glycemic Index (56 to 69) Choose LESS Often	High Glycemic Index (70 or more) Choose LEAST Often
Other: Carrots (Cooked) Melba Toast (Whole Grain, Rye, Oat) Green Peas** Plantain (Green, Boiled) Popcorn (Air-popped) Sunflower Oat Crisp Crackers (e.g. Ryvita Crispbread™) Sweet Potato (Boiled, Steamed) Winter Squash	Other: Ancient Grain Cracker Beets (Cooked) Breton™ Wheat Crackers Chestnuts (Roasted, Steamed) Corn French Fries* Parsnip Potato (Cooked Cooled) Pumpkin Rye Crisp Crackers (e.g. Ryvita Rye Crispbread™) Semolina Taro, Eddoe (Boiled) Triscuit™ Original Crackers Yam (Steamed, Boiled)	Other: Cassava (Peeled, Boiled, Steamed) Corn Starch Gnocchi Plantain (Ripe, Fried) Potato (Instant Mashed) Potato (Cooked Hot) Pretzels Rice Cakes Rice Crackers Soda Crackers Sweet potato (Fried, Baked) Yam (Roasted, Mashed)

**Snow and snap peas are considered non-starchy vegetables so are not included in the chart.

FRUITS

Apple Applesauce (Unsweetened) Apricots (Fresh, Dried) Banana (Green, Unripe) Berries Breadfruit (Boiled) Cantaloupe Cherries (Fresh) Dates (Fresh, Dried) Durian Figs (Fresh) Guava Grapefruit Honeydew Melon Kiwi Longan Mandarin Mango Nectarines Orange Papaya Passionfruit Peach Pear Plum Pomegranate Pomelo Prunes Starfruit	Banana (Ripe, Yellow) Cherries (Canned) Cranberries (Dried) Figs (Dried) Grapes Lychee (Fresh) Jackfruit Pineapple Persimmons Raisins Watermelon	Banana (Brown, Overripe) Breadfruit (Roasted)
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Some fruits have not been assigned a GI because they contain less than 15 g of available carbohydrate per serving (e.g. lemon and lime).

DAIRY & ALTERNATIVES

Low Glycemic Index (55 or less) Choose MOST Often	Medium Glycemic Index (56 to 69) Choose LESS Often	High Glycemic Index (70 or more) Choose LEAST Often
Almond Milk Chocolate Milk (1%, 2%)* Cheese (Natural, e.g. cheddar) Cottage Cheese Cow's Milk (Skim, 1%, 2%) Frozen Yogurt (Reduced Fat)* Greek Yogurt (Plain, 0%, 2%, Reduced Sugar) Ice Cream (Reduced Fat)* Kefir (Plain, Unsweetened) Soy or Nut Cheese Soy Milk (Unsweetened, Reduced Sugar) Yogurt, (Plain, Reduced Sugar-0%, 2%)	Oat Milk, unsweetened Processed Cheese (e.g. processed cheese slices, cream cheese)*	Rice Milk

PROTEIN SOURCES

Baked Beans Black Beans Black Eyed Peas Chickpeas Hummus Kidney Beans Lentils Mung Beans Nuts, Seeds Romano Beans Soybeans/Edamame/Tempeh Split Peas	Lentil Soup (ready-made) Split Pea Soup (ready-made)	Broad Beans
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Additional Items: <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Additional Items: <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	Additional Items: <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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References:

International tables of glycemic index and glycemic load values, 2021, University of Sydney, Glycemic Index Research, GI Search Tool