

Shopping and Eating for Good Health

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Remember that what we buy is what we eat!

Go Whole!!! **Whole Foods** are the best choices because they generally have more fiber and nutrients and no added sugars, fats, salt, and chemical additives. Most fresh vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts, and moderate amounts of fresh fruits are good choices.

Soluble fiber in beans, barley, lentils, oatmeal, and many fruits slow down digestion and absorption of foods, helping to keep blood glucose levels stable. **Insoluble or hard fiber** in whole wheat, spelt, nuts, fibrous vegetables and some fruits take longer to digest and help keep the GI tract clean and healthy.

Glycemic Index and Glycemic Load

The **glycemic index (GI)** measures how fast and how far blood sugar rises after eating a food that contains carbohydrates, with pure Glucose = 100.

Factors that affect GI:

Fiber slows sugar absorption (see above).

Ripe fruits and vegetables have more sugar than less ripe ones.

The **type of starch** - while potatoes may be a complex starch, they are quickly digested and absorbed with a high GI.

The more **fat or acid** a food contains, the lower the GI.

Finely ground grains and flours have higher GIs than the whole grain, seed, nut (or coarsely ground grain). **Go Whole !!!!**

Glycemic load (GL) combines this rise in blood glucose with the relative amount of carbohydrate in the food. $GL = GI \times \text{grams of carbohydrate}$. For example, the sugar in watermelon would have a high GI, but because the melon is mostly water, the GL is more moderate.

Examples of GL for Carbohydrate Foods

Low - High fiber fruits and vegetables (not including potatoes)
Bran cereals, beans, lentils, chick peas.

Medium - Barley, brown rice, oatmeal, bulgur, whole grain pasta and rice cakes.

High - Potatoes, refined cereals, breads, and pasta, white rice, couscous, Grits, crackers, sweetened juices and beverages.



Shop and Eat for Your Heart Too



Persons with diabetes have a three to four times increased risk for heart disease. Therefore, it is important to combine what we know about the best diets for both diabetes and heart disease prevention. Key components of this overlap are listed below:

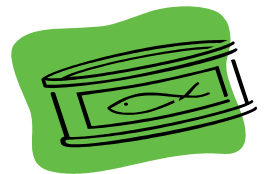
Low Sodium (U.S. Dietary Guideline for at-risk persons is ≤ 1500 mg/day).

Reduced Fat (esp. animal fats, best if fat about 20% of calories).

Very Complex Carbs (Low GI and GL foods).

Reduced meat — some fish (Omega-3 fatty acids are good for you).

Beans are your new best friends!!! (Soluble fiber lowers GI/GL and lowers cholesterol too)



Labels Reading 101 (Read 'til you drop!!!)

- ☺ Be sure to check serving sizes and how many servings per package these vary widely by type of food.
- ☺ Different formulations within the same type of food may also vary dramatically, eg. Spaghetti sauces.
- ☺ Check calories, sodium, total carbs, fiber, and fat breakdown.
- ☺ Beware of additives: If you can't pronounce it, best not to buy it!!!
- ☺ Use sugar substitutes sparingly and wisely. (See back of handout)

Difficult Deli Decisions

Unfortunately, many processed foods and ready-to-eat deli foods tend to be high in sodium (check out foods like burritos), high in fat, or in sugar. Ask for not only the ingredient list, but the actual amounts per serving. If amounts not available, ask for a small taste to see if salty or sweet. When buying a reduced sugar product, check to see if bunches of salt or fat have been added instead!

Seek the Salad Bar

This may be your best option. But here again you need to use all your knowledge to pick fresh whole foods with low GI/GL and go easy on salad dressings and salty, sweet, or fatty prepped foods in the salad bar (e.g. potato salad, pickled beets, salty tofu).

Resources

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