

Patient Information

How Foods Affect Blood Glucose: Glycemic Impact

YOU MAY BE WONDERING HOW DIFFERENT FOODS AFFECT YOUR BLOOD GLUCOSE. PERHAPS YOU'VE NOTICED THAT WHEN YOU EAT CERTAIN FOODS OR MEALS, YOUR GLUCOSE LEVELS ARE MUCH HIGHER THAN WHEN YOU EAT OTHER MEALS.

In the chart below, foods are listed in three different groups: those that have the lowest impact or effect on glucose levels, those with a medium impact, and those with the greatest impact. The list takes into account the foods' overall glycemic index as well as the amount of food typically eaten as a serving, also known as the glycemic load. Using this guide, along with carbohydrate and portion control, can help people with diabetes improve blood glucose control. Choosing foods with a lower glycemic impact may also help with weight loss.

Tips

- If you are wondering why your blood glucose levels are high before lunch, take a look at your breakfast meal. If you usually eat high-impact foods such as frozen waffles or a bagel, try swapping with equal carbohydrate portions of a low-impact food such as oatmeal or pumpernickel toast and see if that helps.
- Adding lean sources of protein (meat, poultry, low-fat cheeses) and heart-healthy fats (olive oil, nuts, peanut butter) can help reduce the overall glycemic impact of a meal or snack.
- Remember that checking your blood glucose before and 2 hours after a meal is the best way to know how your body handles the meal.
- More information on glycemic index and glycemic load values can be found online at www.glycemicindex.com.

Low Glycemic Impact <i>Choose most often</i>	Medium Glycemic Impact <i>Choose more often</i>	High Glycemic Impact <i>Choose least often</i>
Breads, Cereals, Grains, and Pasta		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearty whole-grain specialty breads such as whole-meal wheat, rye, and pumpernickel • Sourdough bread • All-Bran cereal • Steel-cut oats/oatmeal • Barley, bulgur wheat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-wheat bread • White pita bread • Tortilla • Shredded wheat • Raisin bran • Brown rice, long-grain rice • Couscous, quinoa, pasta 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bagel • English muffin • White bread • Cornflakes • Instant oatmeal • Instant rice, short-grain rice • Frozen waffles
Fruit, Vegetables, and Legumes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lentils, dried beans • Apples, peaches, oranges • Strawberries, blueberries • Carrots, green peas • Spinach, broccoli* • Lettuce, cucumbers* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cantaloupe, pineapple • Bananas, raisins • Watermelons • Corn, sweet potatoes • Plantains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potatoes, baked or boiled • Instant mashed potatoes
Dairy, Beverages, Other		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk, yogurt • Frozen desserts (ice milk, ice cream) • Nuts, seeds, peanut butter* • Eggs, low-fat cheeses* • Lean meats, fish* • Heart-healthy oils, vinegar* 		Sweetened soft drinks, sports beverages

*These items contain very little carbohydrate. Therefore, they have very little effect on blood glucose.