

Low Glycemic Index Diet for Lowering Blood Sugar

Who is this handout for?

This handout is for patients with type 2 diabetes and their family and/or caregivers who are interested in learning more about a low glycemic index diet for lowering blood sugar.

Why do I need to lower my blood sugar?

Research has shown that fasting (before you eat) blood sugar is important to lower to reduce your risk for diabetes complications. Research also suggests that lowering post-prandial (after you eat) blood sugar is also helpful.

What are carbs?

Carbohydrates or “carbs” are found in many foods:

- Starches (breads, cereals)
- Starchy vegetables
- Dairy (milk, yogurt, ice cream)
- Sugary foods
- Sugar free foods
- Fat free foods

The amount and quality of carbs you eat are a significant cause of how high your blood sugar rises when you eat.

What is a “low glycemic index” diet?

The glycemic index is a list of foods that have been ranked from high to low. Foods that are low on the glycemic index have been shown in research studies to cause a lower increase in blood sugar compared to high glycemic index foods. Following a low glycemic index diet means eating foods that are low on the glycemic index.

Does following the low glycemic index diet mean avoiding carbs?

No. You may eat carbs as part of a low glycemic index diet. However following a low glycemic index diet may require you to change the foods you may be eating. **Have fun with this!** This is an opportunity to try new recipes and to make new versions of your favorite recipes.

Where do I start?

Below is a chart of many common carbs people eat and delicious replacements that are lower on the glycemic index.

Higher Glycemic Index Food	Replace with a Lower Glycemic Index Food
Baked potato	Sweet potato
Mashed potato	Mashed cauliflower, parsnips, yellow turnips (rutabaga) or celiac root.
Rice	Wild rice, barley, or lightly mashed cauliflower
Pasta	Soba noodles (buckwheat), spaghetti squash, or spiral sliced vegetables
Bread	Look for 100% whole wheat. However even 100% whole wheat can significantly boost your blood sugar. Try 100% rye, 100% spelt, or oatmeal made with 100% whole wheat flour. Seven grain breads may also be an option.
Flour for baking	Try mixing conventional flour with almond flour, spelt, or buckwheat.
French fries	Try baked sweet potato fried or baked parsnip fries.

Where can I find more information?

Ask your doctor or healthcare provider to help you meet with a nutritionist, Certified Diabetes Educator or member of your primary care provider's Community Health Team. They will have lots of resources to help you manage your diet.

Trustworthy website

- American Diabetes Association (ADA)
www.diabetes.org