

Tips on how to follow a low GI diet

A low GI diet is easy to follow!

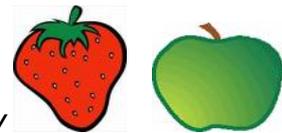
Replacing high GI foods with low GI foods in a 'this for that' approach will lower the overall GI of each meal, for example eating porridge for breakfast instead of cornflakes, whole-grain bread instead of white bread, or fruit and yogurt in place of cookies.

Remember the GI only applies to foods containing carbohydrate. It is impossible to measure the GI of protein rich foods (meat, eggs, fish, cheese and nuts) or fat rich foods (oils, butter and cream).

A food's GI does not make it a 'good' or 'bad' food. Some high GI foods like potatoes are still nutritious foods. Also, many low/medium GI foods like chocolate and crisps that are high in saturated fat and therefore are not particularly healthy. We need to base our food choices on the overall nutritional content of food, taking into account the saturated fat, salt, fibre, energy content, and the GI.

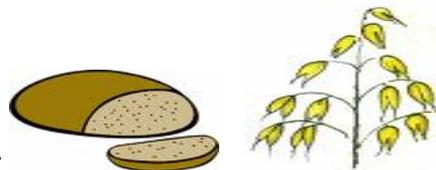
7 Guidelines to low-GI eating

1. *Eat 5 or more servings of fruit and vegetables each day*



Aim to have 2 portions of fruit and 3+ portions of vegetables every day. Fruit and vegetables provide us with fibre, water, vitamins and antioxidants which help protect us against colds and flues and numerous diseases (ranging from high blood pressure to cancer). Most fruits have a low GI – particularly apples, oranges, pears, peaches, plums, kiwis and berries. Tropical fruits, such as pineapple, melon, mango and bananas have medium to high GI. Berries have the lowest GI of all fruit so enjoy them by the bowl. Most vegetables have a low GI. Potatoes are the exception; having a high GI. However, new/baby potatoes or sweet potato have lower GI values than old and mashed potatoes.

2. *Eat low GI breads and cereals and grains*



The type of bread, cereal and grains you eat affect the GI of your diet the most. The best breads to choose include: granary/mixed grain bread, sourdough, rye, pumpernickel, sourdough, pitta, and wraps. Fruit cake has also a low GI due to the fruit content.

The best cereals to choose are oat based cereals, shredded wheat, no-added sugar muesli or all bran. Grains like pasta, noodles, basmati rice, sweet

potato, new baby potatoes, barley and buckwheat are the lowest GI versions. These foods will keep you fuller and more satisfied for longer.

3. *Eat more legumes, beans, peas, and lentils*



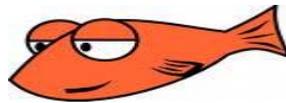
Legumes (peas, beans, lentils and pulses) have the lowest GI values of almost any other food. They are also high in fibre and are full of nutrients (B vitamins, iron, zinc and magnesium). Legumes are also 'prebiotics'. This means that they provide food for our gut bacteria and keep our digestive systems healthy.

4. *Eat more nuts and seeds*



Even though nuts and seeds are high in fat they mainly contain healthy unsaturated fats, so they are a nutritious substitute for less healthy snacks that are high in saturated ('bad') fats such as chocolate and biscuits. Nuts contain lots of vitamin E and selenium; both are powerful antioxidants that protect against premature ageing from UV rays of the sun. Aim to have a small handful of nuts a day which is about 21 almonds/cashews. Flaxseed is useful to sprinkle over cereal or add to baked goods. Nut butters (peanut butter, cashew butter) may be used instead of butter.

5. *Eat more fish and seafood*



Fish does not have a GI value as it is a protein food. Fish is an excellent source of protein and healthy fats. Oily fish (salmon, trout, mackerel, sardines and fresh tuna) contain omega 3 fats which are important for your baby's brain and eye development, but they also protect you from developing heart disease. Some research has linked omega 3 fats with better mood, lower rates of depression and stronger immune function. Aim to have at least one portion of oily fish and one portion of white fish each week. If you dislike fish then an omega 3 supplement is recommended (examples 'mor-DHA' or 'pregnacare' with omega 3).

6. *Eat lean red meat, poultry and eggs*



Meat, chicken and eggs have no GI value as they are a protein food and not carbohydrate. Red meat is the best source of iron (helps in the formation of your baby's blood). Having healthy levels of iron stores increases your energy levels and improves exercise tolerance. A chronic shortage of iron

leads to anaemia, the symptoms of which include pale skin, excessive tiredness, breathlessness and decreased attention span. Choose at least two portions of red meat each week (beef, lamb). Other sources of iron include green leafy vegetables, egg yolk and darker cuts of poultry.

7. *Eat dairy products*



Milk, cheese, yogurt and milk products (milk puddings, custard, ice-cream) are the richest sources of calcium in our diet. Calcium is essential for healthy bones and teeth. It also controls your blood pressure and muscle function. Calcium is particularly important in the last trimester of pregnancy as your baby is laying down their own bones. Try to have 5 servings of dairy products each day (glass of milk, yogurt, and matchbox size of cheese). Remember to count the milk used to make puddings and custards. Ice-cream has a slightly higher GI than milk as there is some sugar added but can be enjoyed in moderation.