

# Diabetes News

A Special Newsletter for MVP Members

# Eating Low-Glycemic Foods

Eating low-glycemic foods is one tool to help keep your diabetes under control. The glycemic index is a rating system for foods that contain carbohydrate. It helps you know how quickly a food with carbohydrate raises blood sugar, so you can focus on eating foods that raise blood sugar slowly.

- Foods that raise blood sugar slowly have a low glycemic index. Most of the carbohydrate-rich foods that you eat with this plan should be low or medium on the glycemic index.
- Eating low-glycemic foods is most helpful when used along with another eating plan for diabetes, such as carbohydrate counting or the plate format. Counting carbs helps you know how much carbohydrate you're eating. The amount of carbohydrate you eat is more important than the glycemic index of foods in helping you control your blood sugar. The plate format helps you control portions and choose from a variety of foods.
- The glycemic index of a food can change depending on the variety of the food (for example, red potato or white potato), its ripeness, how it is prepared (for example, juiced, mashed, or ground), how it is cooked, and how long it is stored.
- People respond differently to the glycemic content of foods. And because many things affect the glycemic index, the only way to know for sure how a food affects your blood sugar is to check your blood sugar before and after you eat that food.
- High-glycemic foods are rarely eaten by themselves, so the glycemic index might not be helpful unless you're eating a food by itself. Eating foods together changes their glycemic index.
- Look at the overall nutrition in foods—and not just their glycemic index—when you plan meals. Some low-glycemic foods, such as ice cream, are high in saturated fat and should be eaten only now and then. And some high-glycemic foods, such as potatoes, have nutrients like vitamin C, potassium, and fiber.
- Eating low-glycemic foods along with high-glycemic foods also can help keep your blood sugar from rising quickly.

## How do you follow a low-glycemic eating plan?

You don't have to deny yourself certain food groups or favorite dishes when you follow a low-glycemic eating plan. Focus on eating measured amounts of low- or medium-glycemic foods and eat a balanced diet.

### Write Down What You Eat Now

The first step is to look at the kinds of foods you're eating now. Write down the carbohydrate-rich foods you eat over several days. Then find the glycemic index of these foods.

Foods in the index are given a number from 0 to 100. The higher the number, the higher the glycemic index. Foods are compared to glucose, which is sugar. It has a rank of 100.

- Foods that raise blood sugar **quickly** are **high**. They are rated 70 or more.
- Foods that raise blood sugar **moderately** are **medium**. They are rated 56 to 69.
- Foods that raise blood sugar **slowly** are **low**. They are rated 55 or less.



## Glycemic Index of Common Foods

Fruits	Glycemic Index		
Apples	High	Medium	Low
Oranges	High	Medium	Low
Watermelon	High	Medium	Low
Vegetables			
Potato, baked	High	Medium	Low
Pumpkin	High	Medium	Low
Sweet potato	High	Medium	Low
Beans and Legumes			
Kidney beans	High	Medium	Low
Lentils	High	Medium	Low
Peanuts	High	Medium	Low
Cereals and Grains			
Rice (brown)	High	Medium	Low
Instant oatmeal	High	Medium	Low
Corn flakes	High	Medium	Low
Breads			
Whole-grain bread	High	Medium	Low
Hamburger bun (white)	High	Medium	Low
White bread	High	Medium	Low
Pasta			
Spaghetti (whole wheat)	High	Medium	Low
Spaghetti (white)	High	Medium	Low
Macaroni	High	Medium	Low

Under columns labeled low, medium, or high, list the different foods you eat, according to their glycemic index. You can see at a glance how many high-, medium-, and low-glycemic foods you eat. You may find that you already are eating many foods that are low or medium on the index. But you also may find many foods that are high-glycemic or on the high end of medium.

A dietitian or certified diabetes educator can help you pick foods that you like and that are low on the index. You can get more information from the American Diabetes Association at [diabetes.org](http://diabetes.org).

### Set Goals and Get Support

- **Have your own reasons** for trying this eating plan.
- **Set a main goal.** Then start with smaller goals that will help you reach your larger goal. For example, if your main goal is to eat only one high-glycemic food a day-and you now eat seven high-glycemic foods a day-you could make a smaller goal to remove one or two of those high-glycemic foods from your diet each week.
- **Think about what might get in your way.** Know that you may have slip-ups, and prepare for how you'll deal with them. Perhaps you went out to eat and had a meal with several high-glycemic foods. Instead of being upset with yourself, you could try to make a plan for the next time you go out to eat. You might be able to look at the menu online beforehand. That way, you can pick low- or medium-glycemic foods ahead of time.
- **Get support** as you make a change in your diet. Ask friends or family to encourage you. They might even want to join you in eating more low-glycemic foods.

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MVP Health Care offers a health management program for members living with diabetes. For more information or to see if you qualify, call 1-866-942-7966. MVP's program is based on guidelines for adult diabetes care developed by the American Diabetes Association: A Collaborative Guideline for the Management of the Adult Patient with Diabetes.

Information in this newsletter does not constitute medical advice. If you have questions about your health, talk to your doctor.

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### Contact Us

For more information, call **1-866-942-7966**  
Monday–Friday, 8:30 am–5:00 pm  
TTY: **1-800-662-1220**

### We value your opinion.

Please fill out a brief, anonymous survey at [mvplistsens.com](http://mvplistsens.com). We will use this information to create a better experience for all of our members. All responses are 100 percent confidential. The survey only takes a few minutes to complete.

# Quick Tips for Being Prepared to Talk to Your Doctor

Patients who have good relationships with their doctors are more satisfied with their care and have better results. Here are some tips to help you and your doctor become better partners in improving your health care:

- Write down your questions before your visit. List the most important ones first to make sure they get asked and answered.
- Bring a “health history” list with you, and keep it up to date.
- Always bring any medications you are taking, including over-the-counter, or a list of those medications (include when and how often you take them) and what strength.
- You might want to bring someone along to help you ask questions and remember the answers.
- Find more information and printable forms at **[mvphealthcare.com](http://mvphealthcare.com)**.

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)



## MVP has online resources to help you take charge of your health.

Make informed decisions about your health by using the Healthwise® Knowledgebase—our online Health Encyclopedia. Curious about the medications you take every day? Visit **[mvphealthcare.com](http://mvphealthcare.com)** and select *Members*, then *Health & Wellness*. The MVP Healthwise Knowledgebase is your one-stop resource for the latest health information.



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