



# Wellness Buddy Tip

Providing guidance and support to make the "healthy choice the easy choice."

Chronic Disease Health Promotion and Education Program  
Jackson County Health Department

## Can the Glycemic Index Help with Meal Planning?

Glycemic Index (GI) is a system that ranks how much a certain amount of carbohydrate-containing food raises a person's blood sugar level.

Grains, fruits, vegetables, milk, and milk products are sources of carbohydrates. All carbohydrates are digested into glucose and cause a temporary rise in blood sugar called the glycemic response.

How does the GI work? Foods have been assigned an index number from 1 to 100. Pure sugar (glucose) has been assigned a score of 100.

The score for each food is assigned based on how much a 50-gram portion of carbohydrate raises blood sugar levels compared with pure glucose.

*The glycemic index can be applied only to foods with a reasonable carbohydrate content. Carbohydrates*



*Glycemic Index (GI) includes single carbohydrate food items rather than combinations of foods based on nutrient content.*

*include starch, fruit, milk, and sweets.*

GI values are commonly interpreted as:

Low GI—55 or less—includes most fruits and vegetables (except potatoes and watermelon), whole-grain breads, pasta, legumes, milk, yogurt, other foods extremely low in carbohydrates (some cheeses and nuts), fructose.

Medium GI—56-69—includes whole wheat products, basmati rice, sweet potato, table sugar.

High GI—70 and above—includes corn flakes, rice krispies, baked potatoes, watermelon, croissants, white bread, extruded breakfast cereals, most white rices (e.g. jasmine), straight glucose (100).

Before you begin using GI to assist you with meal planning be aware of the following shortcomings. Several things can affect the GI of a food: the form of the food (liquid vs. solid), the ripeness (as in fruits and vegetables), the degree of cooking involved, how the food was prepared, storage time, fiber content, the combination of foods eaten, and even when you ate last. GI response also can vary widely from person to person.

GI diet plans tend to be low in calories, limited in food choices, and low in overall nutrients.

Volume 4, Issue 1  
July 21, 2010

### Special points of interest:

- Choose high-fiber foods, such as whole-grains, legumes, fruits and vegetables.
- Choose fresh or raw foods over canned or processed foods.
- Adults need 6 to 8 eight-ounce glasses of water every day. By the time you feel thirsty, you are already dehydrated.

## How to Spot a Fad Diet?

- Recommendations that promise a quick fix
- Dire warnings of dangers from a single product or regimen
- Claims that sound too good to be true
- Simplistic conclusions drawn from a complex study
- Recommendations based on a single study or testimonials
- Dramatic statements that are refuted by reputable scientific organizations
- Lists of 'good' and 'bad' foods
- Recommendations made to help sell a product
- Recommendations based on studies published without review by other researchers
- Recommendations from studies that ignore differences among individuals or groups
- Eliminating 1 or more of the 5 food groups



### Contact Information

Mary Beth Gurganus, LD/N  
3045 4th Street  
P O Box 310  
Marianna, FL 32447  
Phone: 850-526-2412 ext 282  
Fax: 850-482-9564  
Email: WellnessBuddy@doh.state.fl.us  
Website: www.jacksonchd.org