Part 1: THE GLYCEMIC INDEX

The glycemic index (GI) ranks carbohydrates (gram for gram) based on their immediate effect on blood glucose (blood sugar) levels. Carbohydrates that break down quickly during digestion have high glycemic indices—your blood glucose goes screaming up as soon as you eat.

Carbohydrates that break down slowly, thus releasing glucose gradually into the bloodstream, have low glycemic indices. With a low GI diet, your glucose and insulin levels remain low. Insulin is the hormone that puts the sugar into your muscles. The higher insulin levels remain, the greater risk you have for diabetes, heart disease and gaining weight. You want your glucose and insulin levels to be as low as possible so you can efficiently burn fat and lose weight. A low GI diet can improve your health. Foods that are low in the glycemic index do not cause the up-and-down fluctuation of glucose levels and insulin levels. If you follow a low-glycemic index diet, your body can very efficiently burn fat, have more energy and stay healthy.

A low GI diet can

- ❖ result in a smaller rise in blood glucose levels after meals
- ❖ help you lose weight
- ❖ improve your body's sensitivity to insulin
- ❖ improve diabetes control
- ❖ improve lipids
- ❖ keep you fuller longer and eliminate cravings
- ❖ helps you with prolonged physical endurance.

Glycemic Load

The glycemic load measures how much sugar you eat in a serving. For example, many of my health-conscious clients tell me, "I don't eat carrots or beets. They are just little sugar cubes because their glycemic index is high." However, their glycemic load is low. At the most, we usually only eat a handful of carrots or a beet. The actual amount we eat is the glycemic load.

Now the question becomes: how do you know what a food's glycemic index or glycemic load is? One of the best Websites is glycemicindex.com. But generally, a good rule of thumb is that if it is found in nature, it probably has a low glycemic index and typically the amount you want to eat is a palm size. The exceptions to this Mother Nature rule are potatoes, corn, tropical fruits (such as pineapples, mangos, and papayas), melons (such as watermelon, honeydew, and cantaloupe), raisins and all dried fruits except for apricots.

So What Foods Should I Eat? Foods in the low range of glycemic index and load

	Glycemic Index	Glycemic Load
Low Range	<55	<10
Medium Range	56-69	11-19
High Range	>70	>20

Low GI/Low GL foods: examples of all good foods to eat

Food Items	Serving Size	Carbohydrates listed on label	Glycemic Index	Glycemic Load
Peanuts	50g/20z	6	14	1
Soybeans	150g/1c	6	18	1
Full Fat Milk	250g/1c	12	27	3

Lentils	150/1c	18	28	5
Chick peas	150/1c	25	28	7
All Bran Cereal	30/0.5c	23	38	9

Medium GI/GL Foods: foods to have occasionally

Food items	Serving size	Carbohydrate as per food label	GI	GL
Macaroni	180/1 1/4c	48	47	23
Orange juice	250/1c	26	50	13
Banana	120/1 each	24	52	12
Wild rice	150/ 1c	37	54	20
Power bar	65/1bar	42	56	54

High GI/GL Foods: foods loaded with hidden sugars!

Food items	Serving size	Carbohydrate as per food label	GI	GL
Popcorn	20/2c	11	72	8
Wonder bread	30/1slice	14	73	10
Jelly beans	30/1ounce	28	78	22
Potato baked	1 flesh/only	30	85	26
Corn flakes	30/1c	36	92	24

Please note that all grains made from white flour or white rice are very high in the glycemic index. Thus, you want to eat only whole grains.

Part 2: SUGAR SUBSTITUTES

Almost 80% of the US population uses some sort of sugar alternative. Most of us know that sugar is bad for us but there are good alternatives that we can use. These alternatives can help stop the sugar craving all of us have from time to time while being relatively healthy.

The BAD List

we want to avoid sugar, powdered sugar, high fructose corn syrup, and artificial sweeteners such as Sweet and Low, Equal and Nutrasweet. The artificial sweeteners contain Aspartame. Aspartame is made up of 50% phenylalanine, 40% aspartic acid and 10% methyl alcohol. Phenylalanine and aspartic acid are important amino acids found naturally in many foods, but this man-made concoction has too much aspartame for our bodies to absorb. The small amount of methyl alcohol has been shown to cause blindness as well as kidney and liver failure. Furthermore, methyl alcohol can break down in to formaldehyde which is used for embalming and is toxic to the nervous system. Aspartame has been shown to possible increase neurological illnesses such as Parkinson's as well as Multiple Sclerosis.

High fructose corn syrup is found in a large range of packaged foods such as tomato sauce, cake mixes, cereals, breads and juice. Manufacturers use high fructose corn syrup rather than natural sugar as it is cheaper and has a much longer shelf life like forever!. Several studies have linked high fructose corn syrup to obesity, heart disease and cirrhosis of the liver.

The Moderate List

Splenda is one of the fastest used sweeteners on the market. It markets itself saying it comes from sugar but after a variety of major chemical processes does it become Sucralose. At this moment, there are no studies on humans as to what sucralose does or does not do. Early rat studies have shown that using sucralose actually puts on body fat. This makes sense because Splenda is 600 times sweeter than sugar. When we eat something this sweet, we are left craving more and more sugar. Furthermore, all the natural sugars will no longer appease us because Splenda is so much sweeter. My advice is don't use it. There are great alternatives to sugar that are natural and will satisfy your sugar craving.

The GOOD List

These alternative are "sugars" that occur naturally in nature. The longer I practice, the more convinced I have become that we must use things that occur in nature. They have been used for thousands of years with great success. Natural sweeteners are honey, molasses, Agave nectar, Stevia, pure maple syrup and fructose.

Honey can come in a liquid or cream form. There are different types of honey but a single blossom honey such as orange blossom, red clover have low glycemic index but use only a small amount

Agave Nectar comes from the Agave plant found in Mexico. It is an intensely sweet syrup that can stop the sugar craving but use sparingly!

Stevia is a very sweet herb from South America that's available in powder and liquid form at health-food stores.

Fructose is a natural low-glycemic sugar found in fruit. It can be found in your local health food store.

Real Maple Syrup comes from the sap of a tree. It is also a better alternative than sugar but please do not confuse man made maple syrup with the real thing!!

Organic Raw Molasses-another sweetener found in nature that is great for baking and cooking with.