



Glycemic Index *InfoGuide*

HOW TO USE THE GI
SCALE TO CUT CRAVINGS
AND BOOST ENERGY

acucomfort

- Acupuncture & Wellness -

THE GLYCEMIC INDEX

What is it?

Have you ever enjoyed a meal, only to experience a crash an hour later and find yourself craving something sweet? Your blood sugar levels might be on a rollercoaster ride. Utilizing the glycemic index can help stabilize those fluctuations.

What is the Glycemic Index?

The glycemic index (GI) is a **measure of how quickly carbohydrate containing foods raise your blood sugar**. The scale goes from 0 to 100. The higher the number, the quicker the glucose spike:

- **Low GI foods (0-55):** slower more stable rise
- **Medium GI foods (56-69):** moderate rise
- **High GI foods (70+):** quick spike

For example, a bowl of steel-cut oats (low GI) raises your blood sugar more gently than a bagel (high GI).



Why the Glycemic Index Matters

Choosing lower GI foods more often helps stabilize your blood sugar, which can help:

- ✓ Promote steady energy
- ✓ Reduce cravings
- ✓ Enhance focus and mood
- ✓ Balance hormones like insulin & cortisol
- ✓ Improve metabolism

REAL LIFE EFFECTS

Signs to pay attention to

Signs of Unstable Blood Sugar

Signs of unstable blood sugar can show up in many different ways throughout the day. Some people notice energy crashes, shakiness, irritability, headaches, brain fog or strong cravings for sugary or salty foods, especially between meals. Others may feel tired after eating, constantly hungry, or rely heavily on caffeine to get through the day. Poor blood sugar balance can also affect mood, focus, sleep and weight management over time.



Unstable Blood Sugar Signs

Pay attention how you feel throughout the day and be aware of:

- ✓ Energy crashes, needing caffeine constantly
- ✓ Cravings
- ✓ Mood swings
- ✓ Brain fog
- ✓ Poor sleep, waking up at night hungry
- ✓ Belly fat storage
- ✓ Shakiness when hungry
- ✓ Feeling sleep after meals
- ✓ Increased hunger shortly after meals

GLYCEMIC INDEX VS. LOAD

What's the difference?

Not all carbs affect your body the same, even if they have the same GI score. That's where glycemic load (GL) comes in. GL tends to give a more accurate picture of how a food affects your blood sugar. Here's how the two compare:

Glycemic Index (GI)	Glycemic Load (GL)
Rates carbs by how quickly they raise blood sugar	Rates carbs by their GI + the amount of carbohydrates per serving
Doesn't account for portion size	Does take portion size into account

What Affects Glycemic Load?

Serving Size

Larger portions of carbs equal a higher glycemic load.

Ripeness

Ripe fruit has a higher GL than unripe fruit. For example, yellow bananas have a higher GL than green ones.

Cooking Methods

Longer cook times and high-temperature methods like roasting increase GL. Shorter cook times and gentler methods like steaming reduce it.

Food Processing

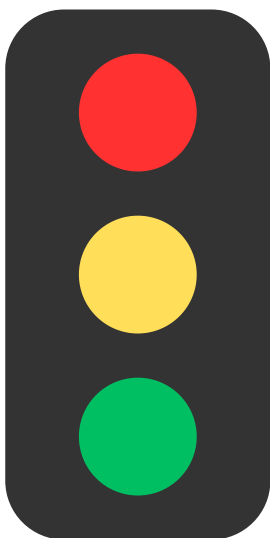
Highly refined or processed foods (e.g., white flour) tend to have a higher GL than whole or minimally processed foods.

GI CATEGORY BASICS

What to know

You don't need to memorize every food's GI score. Just get familiar with the three basic tiers.

Low GI Foods (55 or less)	Medium GI Foods (56-69)	High GI Foods (70 and over)
Raise blood sugar slowly and steadily	Cause a moderate rise in blood sugar	Spike blood sugar quickly
EXAMPLES: Non-starchy vegetables Beans Lentils Quinoa Steel cut oats Nuts & seeds Many fruits (berries, apples, pears, cherries, peaches, citrus) Avocado	EXAMPLES: White potatoes Sweet potatoes Corn Brown rice Rolled oats Some fruits (bananas, mango, pineapple)	EXAMPLES: Soda Fruit juice White rice White bread Instant oats Processed foods made from white flour (crackers, cookies, bagels, cereal, cake, etc.) Watermelon



The Traffic Light Model

One easy way to remember these categories is to think of a traffic light:

- **Red (high GI)** = Caution, eat least often
- **Yellow (medium GI)** = Slow, eat less often
- **Green (low GI)** = GO, eat these most often

The foods you pair with carbs also have a huge impact on how your body responds to meals. Will cover this as well!

THE RIGHT FOOD ORDER

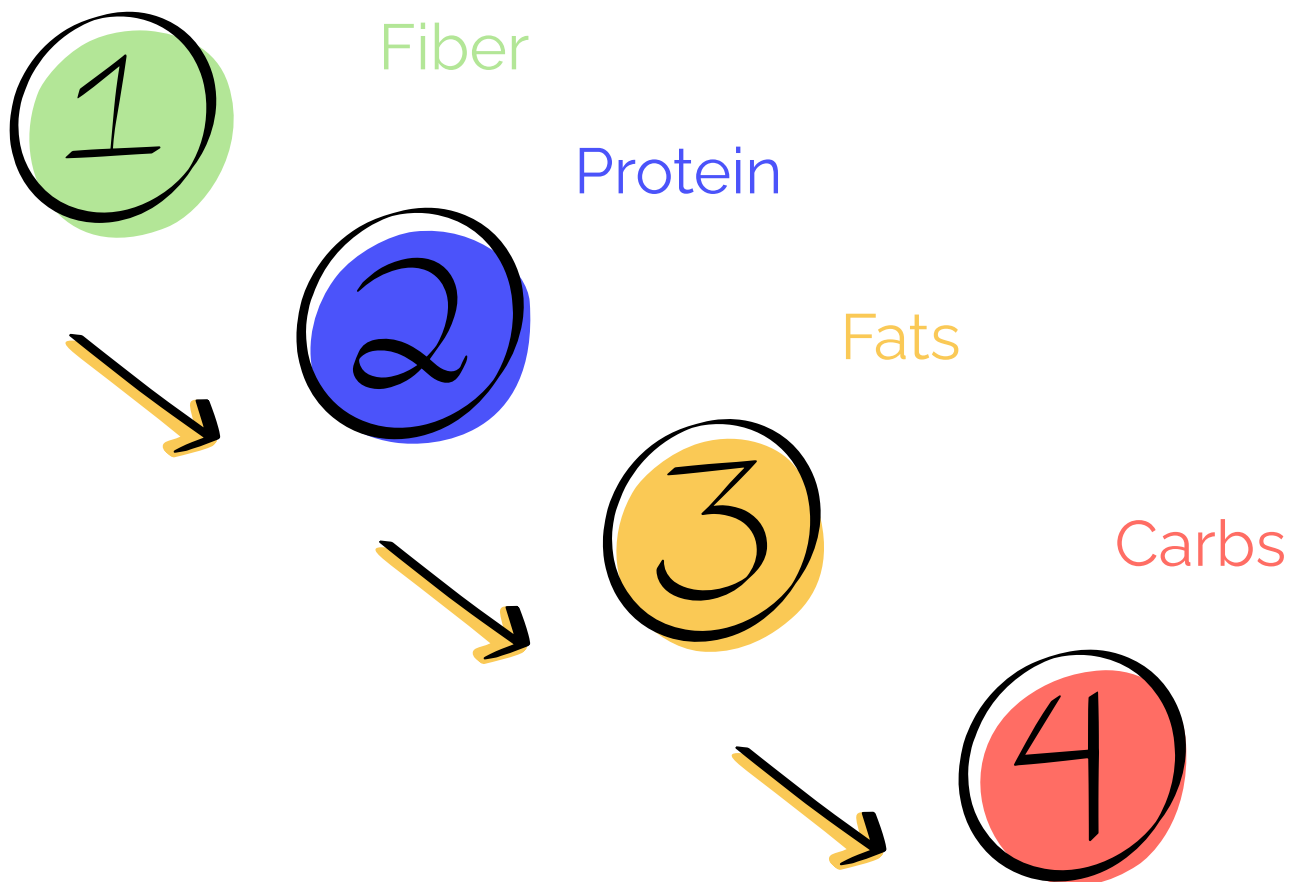
Why it matters

Fiber first

Did you know? The **order in which you eat your foods** may influence your blood sugar response. Starting a meal with **fiber-rich vegetables**, followed by **protein** and **healthy fats**, and eating **carbohydrates** last may help slow down the absorption of glucose into the bloodstream.

This can lead to a steadier rise in blood sugar instead of a sharp spike and crash.

For example, eating a salad and chicken before eating rice or bread may help you feel fuller longer, reduce cravings, and support more stable energy levels throughout the day. Small habits like these can make a surprisingly big difference in overall blood sugar balance.



HOW TO LOWER GL OF MEALS

Top Tips

Add Fiber

Fiber slows digestion and glucose absorption. This reduces the blood sugar spike from carbs and a meal's overall GL.

Ideas: leafy greens, non-starchy veggies, flaxseed, chia seeds, beans/legumes



Include Healthy Fats

Fats also slow glucose absorption. Pair them with carbs to lower a meal's GL.

Ideas: avocado, nuts, seeds, olive oil, coconut milk, nut butter



Pair with Protein

Protein-rich foods are a smart pair for carbs, too. They help create a more gradual rise in glucose.

Ideas: eggs, chicken, salmon, Greek yogurt, tofu, edamame, beef, lentils



Add acid

A splash of acid can slow how quickly carbs are digested, reducing a meal's glucose spike.

Ideas: vinegar, lemon juice, pickled vegetables



SMART MEAL PAIRINGS

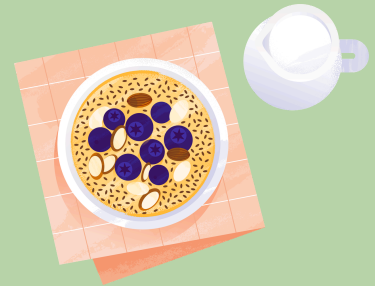
To lower glycemic load

Need some examples on how to put this into action? Here are a few before and after meal pairings for better blood sugar balance:

Breakfast

Before: Instant oatmeal + banana + orange juice

After: Steel cut oats + blueberries (fiber) + chia seeds (protein) + almond butter (fat)



Lunch

Before: White bread turkey sandwich + chips

After: Sprouted grain turkey wrap (protein) with avocado (fat) + veggie sticks + hummus (fiber)



Dinner

Before: White pasta with marinara sauce + garlic bread

After: Chickpea pasta + meatballs (protein) + green salad (fiber) w/olive oil apple cider vinaigrette (fat + acid)



Snack

Before: Granola bar + dried fruit

After: Hard boiled egg (protein) + apple slices (fiber) + peanut butter (fat)



WHY MOVEMENT MATTERS

For blood sugar balance

A brief walk after a meal can significantly benefit your blood sugar levels.

Your muscles utilize glucose for energy. When you engage in movement, your muscles absorb glucose from your bloodstream like a sponge.

This process helps reduce your blood sugar levels and minimizes spikes, particularly after meals rich in carbohydrates.

Even a Few Minutes Helps

No need for an extensive workout; even light activity for just 5 to 15 minutes can enhance glucose regulation and boost insulin sensitivity.

For optimal results, try to engage in movement within 5 to 30 minutes after completing a meal.



Quick Post-Meal Movement Ideas

- Go for a quick 5-15 minute walk
- Do light housework or tidy the kitchen
- Walk up and down a flight of stairs a few times
- Do 30 squats
- Stretch while watching TV
- Play with your kids or pets
- Have a post-meal dance party to a few songs

NOT ALL IS THE SAME

For blood sugar balance

Low GI does NOT always mean Healthy

Examples:

- Chocolate can have a lower GI because of fat
- Ice cream may have lower GI than expected

Glycemic Load is often more important

Examples:

- Watermelon = high GI but low GL
- Carrots = moderate/high GI but low GL



The Glycemic Index is a helpful tool for understanding how quickly certain carbohydrate foods may raise blood sugar levels, but it should not be the only factor considered when making food choices.

Overall nutrition still matters. A food with a low GI is not automatically healthy, just as a food with a higher GI is not automatically unhealthy.

Factors such as fiber content, protein, healthy fats, vitamins, minerals, portion size, and how processed a food is, all play an important role in supporting overall health and balanced blood sugar levels. Focusing on whole, balanced, and minimally processed foods is often more important than looking at GI alone.



GLYCEMIC INDEX

Cheat sheet

Top takeaways to help balance your blood sugar:

- ✓ **Eat lower GI foods most often.** Choose foods like non-starchy veggies, berries, quinoa, lentils, and steel cut oats.
- ✓ **Pair carbs wisely.** Pair carbs with protein, fiber, or fat (or all three!) to slow digestion and smooth spikes.
- ✓ **Watch your portions.** Even healthy carbs can raise your blood sugar if the serving size is too big.
- ✓ **Limit processed foods.** Whole and minimally processed foods are gentler on your blood sugar than refined foods.
- ✓ **Add a splash of acid.** Squeeze lemon on meals, use a vinaigrette dressing, or drink 1 tbsp of apple cider vinegar in water before eating to lower a meal's glycemic impact.
- ✓ **Avoid overcooking starches.** Al dente pasta and firm grains are digested more slowly than overcooked ones.
- ✓ **Move after meals.** Just 5-15 minutes of walking or light movement can reduce a meal's glucose spike.

Challenge

7 DAY BLOOD SUGAR BALANCE CHALLENGE

Small daily habits can make a big difference in supporting stable energy, reducing cravings, and improving overall wellness. Try focusing on one simple habit each day this week!



Add a source of protein to your breakfast.



Drink more water and skip sugary drinks today.



Eat vegetables first at lunch or dinner before eating carbohydrates.



Pair carbohydrates with protein or healthy fats for more balanced meals and snacks.



Take a 10–15 minute walk after one of your meals.



Choose whole foods over highly processed snacks whenever possible.



Slow down and eat mindfully — chew well, eat without distractions, and pay attention to hunger and fullness cues.

Congratulations! How are you feeling now?

Remember: Progress is made through small, consistent habits — not perfection.

READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP?

Let's talk!

Learning about blood sugar balance is a wonderful first step toward improving your energy, cravings, mood, and overall wellness. Small changes can truly make a big difference over time.



Meet Alexandra



Hi!

My name is Alexandra Herold, and I am a Registered Acupuncturist, Health Coach, and Holistic Wellness Practitioner with a passion for helping people create realistic, sustainable lifestyle habits that support long-term health and well-being.

I currently offer:

- Health Coaching
- The Weight Balance Journey Program
- Reg. Acupuncture Treatments
- Lifestyle & Wellness Support
- Educational Wellness Resources

If you would like personalized guidance and accountability on your wellness journey, I would love to support you.

For more information or to book a session, please visit: www.AcuComfort.ca

Alexandra