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When high GI foods make the body produce high levels of insulin in the blood stream, the body also releases substances that push fat circulating in the blood, into storage in fat cells. This means that body fat is increased and body weight is gained. In addition, as blood glucose levels plummet with the effect of high insulin levels, irritability and aggression is often the result. When blood glucose levels then hit rock bottom, the body has now run out of fuel and it may breakdown body protein stores (muscle tissue) in an effort to produce energy. The result is loss of body lean mass. The higher our lean body mass, the higher our metabolism and the lower the lean body mass the lower the metabolism.

Thus, there are three consequences of eating high GI meals that directly affect the ability to lose weight.

1. When eating high GI foods, body fat is increased (due to the high insulin levels).
2. Lean body mass is lost.
3. Metabolic rate is lowered which means calories are burnt less easily.

But there is more.....

High GI intakes with the resultant high insulin levels, also increase the risk for developing diabetes, hypoglycemia, insulin resistance, cancer, strokes and heart attacks.

So, to get the most out of your meals, make sure that most of your food choices are low GI. Slower release foods are the better choice. Choose lower GI.

Below is a very brief table with a few commonly eaten foods sorted into slower release carbohydrates (lower GI) and fast release carbohydrates (high GI). For better blood glucose control, choose those foods with the lower GI as the basis of every meal.

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Slower release – LOWER GI
The better choice

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Fast release – HIGH GI

Only occasionally
Use half the portion

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Low GI breads – there are 20 types in SA,

Pumpernickel,

100% rye breads,

Seed breads

Regular or standard bread: white, brown and whole wheat

Bread rolls

Provita

Savoury crackers

Rice cakes & corn thins

Kelloggs high fibre bran, Kelloggs Bran Flakes, Right Start Bran Flakes, Right Start Fibre Plus,

Pronutro wholewheat, original & Apple Bake

Most breakfast cereals

Morning Harvest Muesli (Bokomo), Fine Form Muesli, Vital Muesli, Nature's Source apple and spice l

Most other muesli's

Bokomo or No Name brand oats porridge cooked in milk

Jungle and Tiger oats porridge

Mealie meal porridge

Oats-so-easy, Original only!

Cupo'oats (Bokomo), all flavours

Instant oats

Pasta, including macaroni, spaghetti and noodles

2-minute noodles

Rice including white rice and basmati rice

Rice for paella, Arborio rice

Baby or new potatoes

Potatoes, baked, mash & chips

Sweet potato

Polenta

Green mealies and corn (tinned or frozen)

Millet

Stampkoring (pearled wheat)

Biscuits and rusks

Barley

Cake, cupcakes, muffins

Couscous

Baked beans

All other dry cooked beans, peas and lentils.

All vegetables except those listed high GI

Asparagus, green beans, broccoli, cauliflower, patty pans, courgettes, spinach, brinjals, lettuce, tomato

Turnips, parsnips

All citrus fruits – oranges, naartjies, mandarins, lemons, grapefruit, etc.

Melons

All deciduous fruits – apples, peaches, pears, grapes, nectarines, apricots, berries, etc.

Books that will help you put the Glycemic index concept into practice:

The low GI, low fat **recipe books** for the whole family by the South African dietitians Gabi Steenkamp and Liesbet Delpont. EATING FOR SUSTAINED ENERGY 1, 2, 3 and 4 (Tafelberg). SUSTAINED ENERGY FOR KIDS by Gabi Steenkamp, Jeske Wellmann and Tanzia Merlin is

especially written for young mothers to help them make healthier meals to meet the nutritional needs of their precious children. **SNACKS AND TREATS FOR SUSTAINED ENERGY** by Gabi Steenkamp and Jeske Wellman, a recipe book full of delicious snacks that are low GI and low fat.

THE SA GLYCEMIC INDEX and LOAD GUIDE by Gabi Steenkamp and Liesbet Delpont, (GIFSA, 2007) – a useful book to look up the GI of many commonly eaten SA foods.