

Understanding Diabetes And Glycemic Index

understanding
DIABETES AND GLYCEMIC INDEX
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Nutrition And The Glycemic Index

Eating healthy means knowing the nutritional value of the foods we eat. Although once that only meant vitamins and minerals, we now have a new area: the glycemic index of carbohydrates. What this does is give us an indication of how the sugar is being used in the body, and which carbohydrates have higher sugar content and should be restricted. Certain carbohydrates turn to sugar more so than others, and thus create the potential for high blood sugar. Some of these products are easy to identify such as cakes, candies, and other sweets, but it also includes other products such as potatoes, refined white flour, white rice, and even white bread.

Learning to eat carbohydrates that have a lower glycemic index is one step toward having a more nutritionally balanced diet. In addition, these products are more likely to keep your energy level to be at its height of performance, thus preventing mid-morning or mid-afternoon sluggishness that often results from skipping breakfast or consuming foods that are too rich in quick sugars. The carbohydrates that have a lower glycemic index create slow burning energy that keeps a person going longer in addition to maintaining that full feeling that prevents overeating.

For the person who has had trouble with weight in the past, the switch to low glycemic index carbohydrates will be a welcome change. Often people eat either because they need energy or because they feel they are hungry, but the way these carbohydrates work in the body will help with both of those issues and thus a person can eat less, maintain a high energy level, and feel full longer between meals. It will take a little time to become used to the transition, but once you learn new eating habits, you will not want to return to your old way of eating.

The Glycemic Index: Preventing Diabetes Through Diet

For those who are prone to diabetes, a change in diet is the best way to prevent or slow its onset. That means the consumption of carbohydrates that have a low glycemic index so that less sugar is being stored in the bloodstream. This, of course, will not help those who already have diabetes, though it will certainly help keep the blood sugar level under reasonable control – that does not mean you will be able to stop taking your medication, as that is something that is contingent upon your personal case history and your doctor's recommendations.

Aside from those who have diabetes in their families, another risk factor is a woman who develops diabetes during pregnancy. Even if no one in your family has ever had the disease, if you develop it during pregnancy, chances are higher than normal that you will develop it later in life. The transition to a healthier way of eating and a switch to low glycemic index carbohydrates can either prevent or delay the onset. After all, you will be gaining more energy and losing sugar from your bloodstream, so it is reasonable to assume that diabetes will be delayed and even prevented.

If you already have diabetes and are on medication for it, the switch to low glycemic index carbohydrates may alleviate some of your symptoms and keep your blood sugar level under better control. This is especially helpful for those who have found it difficult to keep it under control with medication and diet – perhaps you are eating foods that are actually turning to sugar in the bloodstream, which is what happens with carbohydrates that have a high glycemic index. Reducing the amount of high glycemic index carbohydrates will definitely make a difference in your blood sugar level and help alleviate some of the symptoms that are connected to your diabetes.

The Glycemic Index: Lifestyle Changes

In order to remain healthy in our later years, lifestyle changes are needed that include changing the way we eat. Even if you think you are eating healthy foods, look at what you are eating in the way or carbohydrates. If you are eating white bread, white flour, white rice, potatoes, and cereals that are not in the oat, bran, or barley group, you are eating carbohydrates that have a high glycemic index. That doesn't mean you are going to be able to eliminate all of the carbohydrates that have a high glycemic index, but the goal is to reduce them so that less sugar is going into the blood stream and more is being utilized and turned into energy. The body needs the energy for your to feel rested after a good night's sleep, but you want to consume the slow burning energy rather than the quick energy that is derived from sugar products such as candy, cakes, and other sweets.

Diet and exercise are important to good health, but you want to make sure that you are eating foods that are nutritionally sound. Don't go by things you were taught in school unless you are very young because things that were taught about nutrition ten, fifteen, and twenty years ago have now been changed. While many of us were taught that slow burning carbohydrates included potatoes, white bread, and unsweetened cereals, we are now finding that only a portion of that is correct information. As years go by, science finds out different information about the foods we eat, so it's important to make certain that you have the most current information before you make any lifestyle changes. For this, the Internet is the most reliable source of information since web pages are changed on a regular basis as opposed to a book that you may pick up in the library or bookstore.

The Glycemic Index: Is It Worth The Effort?

When you consider the difficulty that is involved in making changes in the way you eat, the first thing people tend to wonder is whether it's really worth it. When you go on a diet and have to give up or reduce your intake of certain foods, you ask yourself that question, and it has to be an answer with which you can live. If you are overweight and want to lose weight, of course, changing the way you eat will be worth it. The same holds true for switching your eating habits to low glycemic index carbohydrates. Certainly, the body is going to go into shock from the change, but in the future, it will be worth it as you find that you have more energy, your mind functions better, and your health is better.

Changes in eating are never easy, especially not if you have been eating the same way for many years, and if that involves a great deal of unhealthy eating. Lifestyle changes are never easy, but if it's for the benefit of your health, present or future, it's worthwhile to make the effort. Remember, even if you have no health issues at the present time that require you to switch to low glycemic index carbohydrates, the benefits on your future health as you age are enormous. In addition, the earlier you begin eating differently, the easier it is for both you and your family to adjust to the changes. Making a change after twenty years of high cholesterol eating is much more difficult than making the same change after five or ten years. Don't wait until you have a health issue such as the onset of diabetes to make the change; do it now before your doctor forces you to do it because of your health.

The Glycemic Index: It Seems More Difficult Than It Is

Making a transition to a healthier eating style is not as difficult as it seems at first; unless you are one of these that have his mind made up that you don't like wheat bread or whole grain cereal. If you make the changes with a positive attitude, you will achieve far greater success than fighting the transition or doing it "because the doctor made me do it." You have to do it because you know it's the best thing for your health and because you want to do it.

Unfortunately, that sometimes means a health scare that shakes you into reality, thus the reason that so many people fail when they try to change the way they eat.

Making a lifestyle change is all in the perception of it. If a person is really adamant they do not want to do it, then they are going to make it more difficult than it needs to be. For instance, switching to whole wheat bread is a simple transition on a low glycemic index carbohydrate diet, but if a person insists that they "hate" that kind of bread, the transition is going to be more difficult than if they accepted it as part of a regiment of healthy eating. Quite often people fail at diets and other lifestyle changes because they want to be contradictory and insist that they don't see the point in making the changes or "what is the difference if it's white bread or wheat bread" kind of attitudes. It's much like the pregnant woman who is told she can only have one soda per day and insists, "What is one more?" The more difficult you attempt to make the task, the more difficult it will become.

Making lifestyle changes for the benefit of your health can be easy if you allow them to be. You are in charge of the transition to the lifestyle changes, and if you make it difficult, it will be. If, however, you accept that it is for the good of your health, the transition will go smoothly and effortlessly.

Depression And Diabetes

Many people who are diagnosed with diabetes are overwhelmed with an onslaught of new information, medications, doctor visits and a feeling of helplessness. Diabetes can be frightening, particularly for anyone who is not familiar with the disease. We read about complications and insulin and medication and feel hopeless.

Many diabetics experience a period of denial when first diagnosed with diabetes. They refuse to believe there is anything wrong with them. While they remain in denial, the condition worsens. This can often lead to depression. Depression and diabetes often go hand in hand. According to the American Diabetes Association, people with diabetes have a greater risk for developing depression than other individuals.

The stress of management of diabetes can take a toll on an individual. There are new medications to take, blood sugar must be monitored frequently and a record kept for your doctor. There are frequent doctor visits and there may be several different medication combinations needed before your blood sugar is kept under control.

On top of that, people who have diabetes are often faced with sudden lifestyle changes. Foods that they once enjoyed are now taboo. An exercise regime is often recommended, which can be good for depression, but people with depression often have little energy to begin an exercise regime. As the depression continues, people often lose interest in monitoring their blood sugar levels and may even skip their medication.

Symptoms of depression include a loss of pleasure in every day activities you used to enjoy as well as a change in appetite. You may have trouble concentrating and have trouble sleeping. Or you may even sleep too much. Many people suffer from depression, but for a diabetic, it can be life threatening. Depression and diabetes is a dangerous combination.

People who are diagnosed with diabetes can empower themselves by learning as much about the disease as possible from the beginning. This can alleviate the feeling of helplessness that often accompanies the diagnoses. Ask your physician questions. Do research. Find out how you can help manage you disease.

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If you feel you are suffering from some of the signs of depression, ask your doctor to recommend a therapist who is familiar in dealing with people with chronic illness. Therapy can be crucial for a diabetic patient who feels isolated because of all of the extra work involved in treating their illness. Do not be afraid to discuss your illness with family and friends. Diabetes is a nothing to be ashamed of, it is a disease that affects millions of people.

If at all possible, join a support group for others who also have diabetes. Here you can not only find kindred spirits who are experiencing some of the same fears as yourself, but you can also learn new information.

Any time someone is diagnosed with an illness puts them at risk for depression. Their world has changed and no longer feels safe. Worse of all, they feel out of control. If you are diagnosed with diabetes, take back the control and learn how to manage your disease. By empowering yourself, you will not only be able to effectively manage your diabetes, you will eliminate the depression.

Diabetic Diet

Vigilance regarding your diet can not only help you control your diabetes, but can also eliminate the need for insulin. Many people with Type II diabetes are often prescribed tablets or pills in an attempt to control their condition prior to having to use insulin. By following a proper diabetic diet, someone diagnosed with Type II diabetes, which has reached epidemic proportions throughout the United States, can either prolong the need for insulin or continue to treat their condition with more convenient medications.

People with diabetes have a difficult time breaking down carbohydrates in their system. Carbohydrates are a large group of foods that are necessary for a balanced diet. While many people assume diabetics must avoid sugar, this is just one example of carbohydrates. In addition to foods rich in white sugar, carbohydrates include white bread, pasta, rice, potatoes, some vegetables and fruits as well as anything rich with white flour. Carbohydrates are a complex group of foods and different groups cause different effects to the blood stream. While diabetics have a difficult time breaking down any carbohydrates in their blood stream, those with the highest Glycemic Index rating take the longest to break down in the blood stream and cause the most harm.

By following a diet with limited amounts of carbohydrates, being aware of the Glycemic Index and learning which carbohydrates are the most harmful to a diabetic diet, someone with this potentially life threatening condition can keep this disease at bay. If you have recently been diagnosed with Type II diabetes and have been given medication by your doctor as well as diet suggestions, follow the doctor's instructions. Diabetics tend to be in denial more than any other group of patients and remain the most non compliant. By following a good diabetic diet and taking your prescribed medication, you can live a full and normal life span.

A diabetic diet should include limits on carbohydrates and increases in protein. Sugars should be eliminated as well as white flour. Pasta and rice are also rich in carbohydrates. One way someone can follow a good diabetic diet is to follow some of the low carb diets that were popular some years back. Many of these diets either eliminated or limited carbohydrates. There are also many different diabetic cookbooks for those with this condition that can help a person live a happier, healthier life.

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It is unfortunate that so many people are continuing to be diagnosed with diabetes. The good news is that there is plenty of information out on the market with regard to cookbooks and even on the internet regarding how a diabetic diet can help someone with this disease. Diabetes takes a toll on the human body after a certain period of time. By following a good diabetic diet, one can reduce the toll of the disease and live a longer and more fruitful life.

Those with diabetes should become aware of the glycemic index, follow a diabetic diet, see their doctor regularly, monitor their blood sugar and take their medications as prescribed in order to avoid complications that can arise from this disease.

Gestational Diabetes

According to the American Diabetes Association, about four percent of pregnant women develop gestational diabetes. Gestational diabetes is a condition in which a woman who has never had diabetes develops high blood glucose levels while pregnant, usually within the later term of the pregnancy. It is estimated that there are about 135,000 cases of gestational diabetes every year in the United States.

In most cases, women who develop gestational diabetes will not develop Type II diabetes. This is a condition affected by the pregnancy and the inability of the mother to use the insulin naturally developed in her body. It is caused by hormones triggered by the pregnancy and causes the mother to become insulin resistant. Gradually, the mother develops high blood glucose levels, referred to as hyperglycemia.

Normally, a woman with gestational diabetes will be treated for the condition while pregnant. While there are no birth defects associated with this sort of illness as there are with women who have had diabetes prior to being pregnant, there is generally not a large cause for alarm for the child. However, if the condition is left untreated, it can hurt the baby. Because the mother is not getting rid of her excessive blood glucose, the child is getting more than his or her share of energy and fat. This often results in macrosomia. Macrosomia is simply the clinical name for a fat baby.

While some people think a fat baby is the sign of a healthy baby, a child born too fat may have a problem fitting through the birth canal. This can cause shoulder damage and may require a cesarean section birth,. In addition, babies who are born obese can develop breathing problems and, if they remain obese, may themselves develop Type II diabetes.

Fortunately, there is treatment for gestational diabetes. Insulin injections are usually given to the mother to keep the blood glucose levels intact. A woman who is planning on becoming pregnant, however, can avoid the complication of developing gestational diabetes prior to becoming pregnant. Some of the ways a woman can do this is to lose weight if she is already overweight prior to becoming pregnant, develop a healthy exercise routine and follow certain food guidelines. The Glycemic Index is an ideal tool for a woman who is thinking about

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becoming pregnant to use to determine which foods to avoid. The Glycemic Index was developed for diabetics to categorize carbohydrates for those with diabetes.

When you become pregnant, follow the advice from your doctor regarding diet and exercise as well as any carbohydrate diets. Prior to becoming pregnant, discuss any concerns you have regarding weight or diabetes with your physician as he or she can probably give you some advice on how to avoid this pregnancy complication.

Even if you are diagnosed with gestational diabetes, chances are that you will not develop Type II diabetes, neither will your baby and both of you will be just fine. Gestational diabetes is not a reason to panic. There is plenty of care available for women with this condition. Just be sure to follow any instructions given to you by your doctor.

Glycemic Index

The Glycemic Index is a concept developed in the University of Toronto in 1981. The purpose of the Glycemic Index is to measure the effect carbohydrates have on blood glucose levels. The Glycemic Index is imperative for anyone who needs to monitor their glucose level due to diabetes or hyperglycemia. With diabetes reaching epidemic levels in the United States, the development of the Glycemic Index could not have come at a better time. Each year, more people are diagnosed with this potentially life threatening disease that can cause many serious complications. It is important for anyone with this condition to familiarize themselves with the Glycemic Index so they can empower themselves and learn which foods should be avoided.

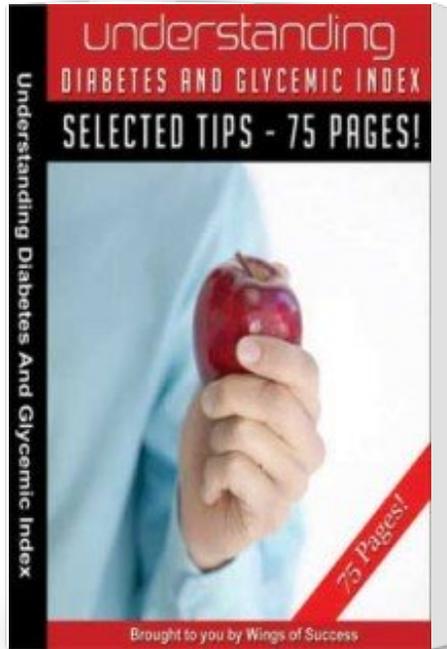
Carbohydrates are a diverse group of foods and all have different ways of breaking down in the system. People with diabetes have a difficult time breaking down certain foods, particularly those high in carbohydrates, in their system. Digestion is slow and sugars and starches are absorbed into the blood stream, causing an excess in blood glucose. Diabetics are often warned to limit their carbohydrate intake because it takes such a long time for most carbohydrates to digest. However, this is easier said than done and it is difficult, if not impossible, for many diabetics to eliminate carbohydrates from their diet. This is one of the reasons many diabetics are non-compliant in their treatment. Because diabetes does not often cause serious complications at onset, many patients refuse to take their medicine and continue eating foods that are high in sugar and starch.

The Glycemic Index is very helpful because it rates different carbohydrates based upon their effect on the different levels of blood glucose. Those foods that digest rapidly cause the less harm to the system and have a low glycemic index. The carbohydrates that take a longer time to digest have a higher rate as they cause more harm to the blood glucose level.

The Glycemic Index ranges from one to one hundred. A low food in the glycemic index has a rating of below 55. These include fruits, vegetables, whole grains and some pastas. Foods that fall between the 56 to 69 range are considered "medium" in the Glycemic Index. They include candy bars, croissants and some rices.

Surprisingly, although a candy bar scores in the medium classification of the glycemic index, it is not as harmful as those carbohydrates that score in the high glycemic index range. These

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