

# **PLANET ORGANIC**

## **GLYCAEMIC LOAD**

You've probably heard about the GI diet which does not focus on counting calories but looks at the glycaemic index (GI) of foods –the rate at which they release sugars into the bodies. Below we explain what a Glycaemic Load diet is and how it is not only a great way of losing weight but also a healthy way of living.

Fast releasing carbohydrates (take a chocolate bar as an extreme example) give a quick rush or high so that people feel good after they've eaten one. However, not long after they experience a slump in their mood and feel less energised as blood sugar levels dip.

Unstable blood sugar levels can cause mood swings and depression, and some people feel much happier and healthier when they change their diet so that levels are stabilised.

### **How the body deals with glucose**

The energy released from the food we eat is broken down in the body to glucose and is carried through the blood to the cells. If there is too much glucose in the bloodstream insulin is released from the pancreas to:

- direct the excess glucose to be stored as fat around various organs
- inhibit the conversion of existing fat stores into useable glucose

When levels of glucose are excessively high on a regular basis insulin starts to run low or stops being produced altogether. If blood sugar levels fluctuate over a long period of time the pancreas can become exhausted leading to diabetes.

### **Slow releasing foods**

Eating slow-releasing foods enables blood sugar levels to be more stable and prevents that desire for a fizzy drink, a bar of chocolate or sweet cakes and biscuits because you feel a bit shaky or tired.

The benefits of avoiding fast releasing foods are considerable – they enable your blood sugar levels to stay stable so that you feel more cheerful, they make you less likely to get diabetes and they help you to stay slim and fit.

A diet that is abundant in whole grains, fresh vegetables, oily fish and seeds and does not contain highly processed convenience foods and snacks is the most nutritious for you and your family.

### **Glycaemic Load**

The Glycaemic Load or GL has been advocated recently by leading nutritionists as a better measure than GI. It is calculated by taking the GI of a food, the percentage carbohydrate content and the typical serving size. It therefore takes into account how much carbohydrate there is in the average service of different foods, rather than simply how quickly the carbohydrate will be converted into glucose.

### **See the chart (below) to find out what the GL of your favourite foods is.**

The reason GL is more important is that some foods are equally fast releasing – for instance watermelon has a relatively high GI like chocolate, but 100g of water melon contains much less carbohydrate than the equivalent amount of chocolate!

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- 120g of watermelon = 4 GL
- 50g of chocolate = 14 GL

### **THE GLYCAEMIC LOAD CHART**

*Information from The Holford Low GL Diet Made Easy by Patrick Holford and Optimum Nutrition for your Child's Mind, by Patrick Holford and Deborah Colson*

<b>Food</b>	<b>Size</b>	<b>GL per serving</b>
boiled eggs	2 x medium size	0
blueberries, raspberries, raw strawberries or blackberries fresh	120g or medium bowl	1
peanut butter	16g or 1 tbsp	1
oatcake	10g or 1 oatcake of different types	2 -3
tomatoes	1 medium tomato	2.5
raw grapefruit	120g or ½ medium size	3
plain yoghurt (no sugar)	200g or small pot	3
brown basmati rice	20g	3.5
wholemeal rye bread	20g or 1 slice	5
carrot and walnut cake	1 medium slice	5
dried apricots	3	5
banana	½ small banana	5
hummus	200g or one small tub	6
corn on the cob	½ cob or 60g	7
boiled potato	1 medium sized	7
baked potato	½ potato	7
potato crisps	1 small packet	7
white rice	25g	7
wholemeal bread	1 thick slice (30g)	9
white baguette	30g (1/9 baton)	15
chocolate bar	50g	14

*Advocates of the GL diet as opposed to the GI diet are renowned nutritionists like Patrick Holford whose book The Holford Low GI Diet Made Easy explains the principles and gives plenty of recipes. Other books are those by Rick Gallup, The Family GI Diet, The GI Diet and they are all available at Planet Organic.*

### **A low GL diet**

There are plenty of tips to help you to maintain a low GL diet:

- Find out the GL of foods you eat.
- Eat regular meals including breakfast.
- Avoid refined sugars (white sugar) that is often added to many processed foods.
- Choose whole grains such as brown basmati rice, wholemeal bread, wholemeal pasta.
- Combine carbohydrates with protein (unlike another famous diet!) because it slows the absorption of sugars.
- Eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.

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## **Healthy eating**

At Planet Organic we believe that food should be healthy, nutritious and delicious. By following these guidelines and watching your fats and eating plenty of whole grains you are doing your best to maintain optimum health.

To find out more about healthy eating go to [Organic Food](#), [Great Whole Grains](#), [Superfoods](#), [Healthy Fats](#) and [Seasonal Eating](#).