

WHAT IS GLYCEMIC INDEX? (ЩО ТАКЕ ГЛІКЕМІЧНИЙ ІНДЕКС?)

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Глікемічний індекс як показник, що відображає швидкість, із якою розщеплюється, перетворюючись на глюкозу, в організмі людини той чи інший продукт, є дуже важливим для кожного фахівця з харчування.

The glycemic index, simply put, is a measure of how quickly a food causes our blood sugar levels to rise.

The measure ranks food on a scale of 0 to 100. Foods with a high glycemic index (GI) are quickly digested and absorbed, causing a rapid rise in blood sugar. These foods that rank high on the GI scale are often high in processed carbohydrates and sugars. A baked potato without the skin clocks in at 98.

Meanwhile, foods with a low GI are digested and absorbed at a slower rate, and, subsequently, cause a slower rise in blood sugar levels. These are typically rich in fibre, protein and/or fat. Examples of these include apples with a glycemic index of 28, Greek-style yogurt at 11, and peanuts at 7. Keep in mind that a low GI doesn't mean a food is high in nutrients. You still need to choose healthy foods from all five food groups.

Diets centred on mostly low-GI foods can make it easier to achieve and maintain a healthy weight, since these foods keep us feeling fuller, longer. Low-GI diets have also been shown to improve insulin resistance, and lower glucose, cholesterol and triglyceride levels in people with diabetes.

Add a lean steak or a piece of salmon, a side of broccoli and a salad with vinaigrette, and the protein, fibre and fat will all serve to lower the glycemic index.

The glycemic index doesn't take into account how much we're actually consuming. The GI value of a food is determined by giving people a serving of the food that contains 50 grams of carbohydrate minus the fibre, then measuring the effect on their blood glucose levels over the next two hours. As a frame of reference, a GI higher than 20 is considered high, between 11 and 19 is considered moderate, and 10 or less is considered low.

Even though the glycemic index isn't a perfect system, it can be a useful tool to identify lower-glycemic foods that are often more nutrient-dense, as well as what foods are higher in refined carbohydrates.