



ASSURE[®] BRILLIANCE

COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE & SUPPORT PROGRAM

The “whole” truth about whole grains

Whole grains provide many valuable nutrients that are important for a healthy diet. In fact, studies have shown that whole grains may play a role in maintaining glucose and insulin homeostasis in people who have diabetes as well as those who do not have the condition.¹

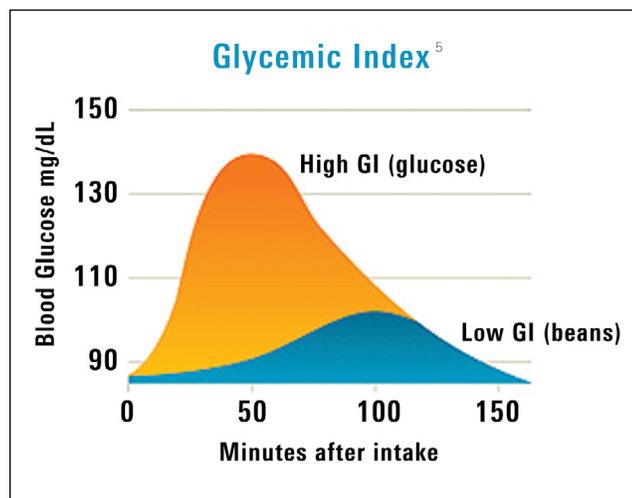
There has been a long-held belief that people who have diabetes should avoid sugar and carbohydrates. Conversely, while monitoring carb intake (carb counting) is a critical component for many following a diabetic diet, carbs should not be eliminated from one’s nutritional regimen but rather be consumed in consistent amounts at regular times each day.² For people with diabetes, monitoring the types of grains consumed—by using tools such as the glycemic index—also can be beneficial.

Glycemic Index

The glycemic index (GI) ranks various foods by the effect they have on blood glucose levels. A lower GI food will not raise blood glucose as high as a food with a higher GI. The GI can be a great reference tool to help fine-tune food choices for the best blood glucose control. By providing whole grain bread over white bread, you can help patients limit spikes in their blood glucose.³

Be cautious when using the GI as some of the values may be deceiving. Nutritious foods can have a higher GI than foods lacking nutritional value. For example, oatmeal has good fiber content, yet it has a higher GI than chocolate. However, whole grains typically have a lower GI than refined grains because of fiber content. Because of these nuances, basic nutrition knowledge should still be applied in order to use the GI most effectively. Each patient will react differently to changes in their diet, so blood glucose levels should still be monitored regularly to observe any changes.³

Visit the following website to see a list of some common foods and their GI values: <http://nasm.org/trainer-resources/glycemic-index>⁴



Liberalized Diets

It is important to remember that older individuals who live in long-term care facilities may have different needs than those outlined above. Older individuals may have a higher risk of malnutrition, so following a strict diet or calorie restriction may cause more harm than good. For this reason, liberalized diets should be considered as a method to improve nutritional status and overall quality of life. Liberalized diets may not be appropriate for every patient, so every aspect of your patient’s care should be taken into account when providing diet recommendations.²

References

- 1) Ye EQ, Chacko SA, Chou EL, Kugizaki M, Liu S. Greater Whole-Grain Intake is Associated with Lower Risk of Type 2 Diabetes, Cardiovascular Disease, and Weight Gain. *J Nutr.* 2012;142(1304-1313).
- 2) Position of the American Dietetic Association: Liberalization of the Diet Prescription Improves Quality of Life for Older Adults in Long-Term Care. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 2005;105:12(1955-1965).
- 3) Glycemic Index and Diabetes. American Diabetes Association web site. <http://www.diabetes.org/food-and-fitness/food/what-can-i-eat/understanding-carbohydrates/glycemic-index-and-diabetes.html>. Updated May 2014. Accessed June 30, 2014.
- 4) Trainer Resources. National Academy of Sports Medicine web site. <http://nasm.org/trainer-resources/glycemic-index>. Accessed July 3, 2014.
- 5) Glycemic Index Chart. Weight Loss For All web site. <http://www.weightlossforall.com/glycemic-index-chart.htm>. Accessed July 3, 2014.