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The Glycemic Index and Dieting

By Protica Research

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The field of nutrition is awash with charts, tables, diagrams, models, acronyms, and abbreviations; more than the average person can memorize. As such, one often comes across someone who has simply burnt out trying to keep track of how much to eat, when to eat it, how to find the calories from fat, the RDI, the DV, and so on. There is an overkill of useful information within the nutrition field, and it can ironically provoke one to grow weary and exhausted, tune out, and go grab a fast food burger.

Yet every once in a while, a concept within the nutrition field emerges that truly demands attention. Over a decade ago, the USDA's "Food Pyramid" was one such concept because it helped eaters discover how many gaps existed in their typical daily diet. Now, as the Food Pyramid begins to take a new shape, and as the nutrition field works to establish itself as the most important branch of health care in the 21st century, an invention called the Glycemic Index is taking center stage.

The Glycemic Index (GI) is not new; it has been around for more than 2 decades. Yet until recently, its exposure beyond the world of diabetes has been limited [i].

The Glycemic Index indicates how "high" or "low" blood sugar levels change in response to carbohydrate intake. A "high" Glycemic Index indicates carbohydrates with a swift breakdown, whereas a "low" Glycemic Index indicates carbohydrates with slow, gradual breakdown. Both terms are of equal importance to diabetics, because there are times with high Glycemic Index foods are required, and times where low Glycemic Index foods are required.

Indeed, the Glycemic Index itself is not new, but its application far beyond the borders of a diabetic dialogue is notable; especially for dieters.

People striving to lose weight often face a nemesis much tougher than establishing an exercise regimen or introducing healthier foods into their diet. The problem is one of energy. Many dieters are surprised - and disturbed - to learn that their diet program is causing them to lose more than inches and pounds: they are losing energy.

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This is often expressed as a complaint, as in "I'm feeling weak", or even "I can't stay awake". Many dieters and those advising them have erroneously chalked this up to a matter of attitude, or will power, or some non-biological cause.

The plain truth is that many dieters have been oblivious to the Glycemic Index, and hence, to the fact that many of the diet foods they have eaten - or are eating right now - score very high Glycemic Index levels. As such, these foods are providing a quick boost to blood sugar levels, and then setting up the dieter for the inevitable fall. This is because high GI foods typically increase blood sugar values, which in turn trigger the hormone insulin to clear sugar from the blood. Since blood sugar (a.k.a. glucose) largely dictates the body's energy levels, it stands to reason that this process manifests as an initial boost in energy, and then as a depletion of energy. This rise and fall of blood sugar - and energy - is often described by dieters using a "roller-coaster" analogy: one minute they feel confident and strong,

and the next, they are about to pass out and require some kind of stimulant in order to make it through the day.

Regrettably for many dieters, that stimulant is usually more high Glycemic Index foods, such as sugary snacks or soft drinks. It is easy to see how this experience can lead an individual to stop dieting. After all, before the diet, the individual was merely gaining weight. On the diet, the individual is gaining weight and is exhausted for most of the day. It is better to quit the diet.

The above scenario only takes place, however, when a dieter unwittingly eats high Glycemic Index foods. Research has shown that low Glycemic Index foods, which raise blood sugar levels much more gradually than high Glycemic Index foods, are very helpful for dieters [ii]. This is because a dieter will experience less of a "roller-coaster" ride while on the diet, and furthermore, will be less inclined to snack because energy in the form of blood glucose is being released slowly and gradually. Low Glycemic Index foods are much more efficient sources of energy than high Glycemic Index foods, because the body needs less insulin to convert food into energy [iii].

Despite the growing awareness that low Glycemic Index foods are beneficial, the world of diet foods has not kept pace. This is because many manufacturers are searching frantically to find low Glycemic Index carbohydrates sources for their products, and overlooking a basic, simple fact: the lowest possibly Glycemic Index is no carbohydrates at all.

These zero-carbohydrate/zero sugar nutritional supplements - which are quite rare in the market - do not deliver any sugar to the bloodstream. As a result, dieters do not have to worry about riding the "roller coaster" of energy spikes and pitfalls.

Yet there is an even greater benefit for dieters who choose a 'zero sugar' nutritional supplement. If that low Glycemic Index nutritional supplement is rich in complete protein, then it will act as a sort of antidote to high GI foods by helping to combat their adverse consequences.

For example, a dieter who eats a high Glycemic Index candy can mitigate the roller-coaster spike in blood sugar levels by eating a nutritional supplement that has very low Glycemic Index and has a rich source of complete protein. This is because the protein in the nutritional supplement mixes with the

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high Glycemic Index of the candy bar, and effectively lowers the overall Glycemic Index. This is welcome news to dieters who would otherwise be seeing those extra carbohydrates transformed by insulin into triglycerides, and stored in adipose tissue; also known as body fat.

Currently, only a handful of nutritional supplements are designed to offer zero carbohydrates and thus score as low as possible on the Glycemic Index. And of these zero-carbohydrate products, even fewer offer a rich source of complete protein that effectively helps counter the blood sugar spike impact of high Glycemic Index foods.

It is inspiring to note that Glycemic Index is getting some well-deserved attention from outside the diabetic community, where it has helped millions of people eat wisely. Now, dieters and obese people can enjoy the wisdom that this index promotes.

ABOUT PROTICA

Founded in 2001, Protica, Inc. is a nutritional research firm with offices in Lafayette Hill and Conshohocken, Pennsylvania. Protica manufactures capsulized foods, including Profect, a compact, hypoallergenic, ready-to-drink protein beverage containing zero carbohydrates and zero fat. Information on Protica is available at <http://www.protica.com>

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[i] Source: "The G.I. Diet: A Food Drill". CBS News.
<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/03/04/earlyshow/living/main604138.shtml>

[ii] Source: "The Glycemic Index". The Healthy Weight Forum.
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[iii] Source "Glycemic Index". WebMD.
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Low Carbohydrate Stupidity

By Stephen Bucaro

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Low Carbohydrate Stupidity

By Stephen Bucaro

The latest buzz word for today's diet scams and prepackaged food rip-offs is "low carb". "Eat all the fat and meat you want and still lose weight." Yeh, when your cold dead body starts to dry up!

Let's make one thing clear, without carbohydrates you die. Carbohydrates; fruits, vegetables, and grains provide the fiber, sugar, and electrolytes your body needs to survive. Without these vital nutrients, you die.

How did this carbohydrate stupidity get started? It started as the result of confusion about a new discovery called the glycemic index.

When you eat carbohydrates, your blood sugar level rises. Excessive blood sugar is not good for your body. To clear the sugar from your bloodstream, your pancreas releases insulin. This causes the sugar to be stored in your fat cells.

The fact is that you need some sugar in your blood because that's where your energy comes from. Without blood sugar, neither your muscles nor your brain will work. But excess blood sugar is a problem.

New research has discovered that eating certain refined carbohydrates causes your blood sugar to rise much higher and stay high longer than eating whole carbohydrates.

Note: As you age, your pancreas becomes less efficient at

producing insulin. As a result, sugar is not effectively cleared from the bloodstream, resulting in diabetes.

The glycemic index uses the blood sugar rise caused by eating pure sugar as a guide for rating other foods. Pure sugar has a glycemic index of 100. To stay thin and healthy, you need to avoid foods with a glycemic index higher than about 50.

The glycemic index of thousands of foods has been measured by monitoring thousands of people's blood sugar after eating the food, and then calculating an average. The results have been published and you can find glycemic tables on the Web.

What are the offending foods?

1. Any food made of refined flour; bread, cake, cookies, cereal, crackers, donuts, etc.
2. White rice.
3. Potatoes.

The above foods will cause your blood sugar to rise rapidly and stay high for a long period. If the above foods are a regular part of your diet, you will be gaining weight uncontrollably. Avoid these foods and your weight will gradually fall back to a normal weight zone.

What are the good carbohydrates?

1. 100% stone ground whole wheat bread.
2. Whole grain wheat bran cereal.
3. Surprisingly, pastas like spaghetti, macaroni, and ravioli have glycemic indexes lower than 50.
4. Even more surprising, chocolate has a glycemic index less than 50.

Most fruits and vegetables have a low glycemic index, but there are some exceptions. Oranges and grapefruits have a low glycemic index but turn them into juice and the glycemic index zooms up. Beans and nuts have a low glycemic index, but watch those calories! Plain baked beans have 240 calories per cup and walnuts have 190 calories per ounce. And just because a product contains a food with a low glycemic index doesn't mean the product's recipe has a low glycemic index.

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Locate a good glycemic index table and use it to select low glycemic index carbohydrates to replace the high glycemic index foods in your diet.

Don't be fooled by listening to the low carbohydrate stupidity. Don't eat only fat and meat. That would cause health problems that will eventually lead to your death.

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