Choosing Healthy Carbs

Nutritionist refer to carbs as simple or complex, low quality or high quality or even good or bad. Carbohydrate-rich foods are also ranked by how quickly the sugar that they contain is absorbed into our bloodstream after eating them. This scale is known as GLYCEMIC INDEX or GI . Foods are ranked on a scale of 0 to 100. Pure glucose has a GI value of 100.

However, the GI value does not account for the quantity of the specific food a person typically eats. A separate measure known as GLYCEMIC LOAD, indicates the change in the blood glucose level when someone eats a typical serving of the food. It is calculated by multiplying the GI value by the amount of carbohydrate it contains. GLYCEMIC INDEX <50 : Low 50-69: Medium > 70: High

GLYCEMIC LOAD 0-10: Low 11-19: Medium >20: High For the highest quality carb intake, choose foods that have low glycemic index and low glycemic Load and limit those with high numbers. Studies have suggested that diets with a higher glycemic index and glycemic load are associated with higher risk of developing diabetes , cardiovascular disease and death.

The link was strongest among people who are overweight or obese.

Glycemic index is one way to think about carbohydrate quality, but it is not the only way. Carbs can also be classified as sugars, starches, and fiber. SUGARS Easily digested, sugary foods, such as sodas, candies and desserts have a high GI value. Eating them causes blood sugar, spikes, and dips, which overtime can make the body less sensitive to insulin, the hormone that regulates blood sugar.

This results in insulin resistance and can trigger weight gain, inflammation, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, and coronary artery disease.

FIBER Foods full of fibers are digested much more slowly and tend to have a lower GI value. These include whole carbohydrate-rich foods such as whole grains, legumes(bean, peas), nuts, vegetables, and fruits. These carbohydrates are also classified as complex, high-quality or good carbs.

STARCHES These are the most commonly consumed form of carbohydrates. This include cereal grains, such as rice, wheat and corn, and root vegetables such as potatoes. People tend to eat mostly highly processed grains, such as white rice and foods made with white flour. These refined starches are quickly broken down into sugar, which is why they have higher GI index

RESISTANT STARCH Resistant start is similar to fiber in that it cannot be directly absorbed by the body. They are resistant to digestion in the small intestine, and instead reaches the large intestine intact. Unlike regular starch, which is broken down into glucose and absorbed into the bloodstream, resistance start act more like fiber in the digestive system.

It passes through small intestine without being digested and then ferment in the large intestine where it is broken down by specific gut bacteria. Eating foods high in resistant starch helps the growth of these health promoting bacteria. They produce short chain fatty acids which make our body more sensitive to insulin and reduces inflammation.

In other words, resistance starch has the opposite effect from sugars and other highly processed carbs in the body.

SOMETHING ABOUT POTATOES Potatoes have high glycemic index. Potato lovers might want to consider potato salad instead. REASON- if you leave the potatoes in the refrigerator for one or two days, the cold temperature transforms some of the starch into resistance starch.

Another trick that may slightly lower the foods glycemic impact is to add vinegar or lemon juice, as the acid slows the conversion of starch to sugar in the body.

FOODS WITH LOW GLYCEMIC LOAD Brand cereals, apples, oranges, kidney beans, black beans, lentils, cashews, peanuts, carrots MEDIUM GLYCEMIC LOAD Pearled barley, brown rice, oatmeal, whole-grain bread, whole grain pasta FOODS WITH HIGH GLYCEMIC LOAD White potatoes, refined, breakfast cereals, sugary beverages, candy bars, white rice, white flour-pasta.

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