

GRAINS OF TRUTH FOR DIABETES

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Avoiding pasta to lower your blood sugar? Wondering how to identify whole grains? Does the glycemic index (GI) of grains matter? Here are some grains of truth for diabetes.



Whole grains provide fiber, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and in general have a lower GI which reduces the risk of diabetes. Researchers have found a 30 % lower risk of diabetes with high fiber diets from grains. People who eat at least 2 servings per week of brown rice have a 11% lower risk of Type 2 Diabetes than those that eat less. The risk of getting Type 2 Diabetes was 2 ½ times greater for people who had the highest glycemic load and lowest fiber intake in the study.

The GI measures how a carbohydrate- containing food raises blood sugar. The GI ranges from 0 to 100. The higher the number, the more likely it will raise blood sugars. The GI is also affected by how the food is processed, how it is cooked and the ripeness of fruit. Pasta cooked just until it is firm and chewy has a lower GI than overcooked pasta. A ripe banana will spike blood sugar more than an unripe banana.

Tips:

- Look for the word “WHOLE” grain. “Whole” ensures they used the entire grain which includes the fibrous bran, and nutrient dense germ.
- “Wheat bread” or “wheat flour” is not necessarily whole grain unless it states “whole wheat” in the beginning of the ingredient list.
- Products such as: **100%** whole wheat bread, shredded wheat cereal and Triscuit crackers are 100 % whole grains.
- Lower glycemic foods: Uncle Ben’s brown rice, whole grain pumpernickel bread, pasta cooked al dente, all beans (kidney beans, lentil etc), milk, yogurt, cherries, grapefruit, apples, pears, and plums
- Higher glycemic foods: white bread, white rice especially basmati rice, Cheerios, corn flakes, ripe bananas, potatoes, watermelon, dates and sugar
- Adding protein, fiber or vinegar to foods can help to lower the glycemic index too.

All foods can be included in a healthy diet for people with diabetes. It is a matter of balancing **portions** of all foods to achieve a healthy body weight.

Elliot’s dietitians can design individualized meal plans for patients seeking to delay the onset of diabetes or control their diabetes. Call 663-4524 for more information.

Sources: Center for Science in the Public Interest, Nutrition Action Health Letters, FDA, Dlife.com, and glycemicindex.com.