

# THE BALANCING ACT

## Your Essential Low-Glycemic Diabetes Companion



By Sharon Munsie

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*Hi there, I'm Sharon*

I hope you enjoy **The Balancing Act**, your guide to focusing on low glycemic index foods, lean proteins, healthy fats, and fibre-rich options to help maintain stable blood sugar levels.

I am a Clinical Nutritionist, RN, CDE and Metabolic Balance Coach with 25 years in the health industry; my experience is helping those struggling with chronic disease and weight issues fed up with fad diets and wanting to improve their well-being - so they can get on with living a full and happy life without the stress that comes with weight issues.

Yours in health

*Sharon*



WEIGHT  
GAIN  
TIME

# Portion Sizes

Understanding portion control is crucial when planning meals. This helps to ensure a balanced intake of macronutrients and essential nutrients while minimizing excessive consumption of sugary foods.

Proper portioning helps maintain healthy blood sugar levels and manage diabetes effectively. Paying attention to portion sizes ensures that you are eating the right amount of proteins, fats, and carbohydrates to provide your body with the necessary energy and nutrients.

In addition, it's important to limit sugary foods to prevent sudden increases in blood sugar levels, which ultimately leads to better management of diabetes and improved health in the long run.



# Hand Guide-Protein Foods

One palm-sized for women. Two palm-sized portions for men.

## Vegetables

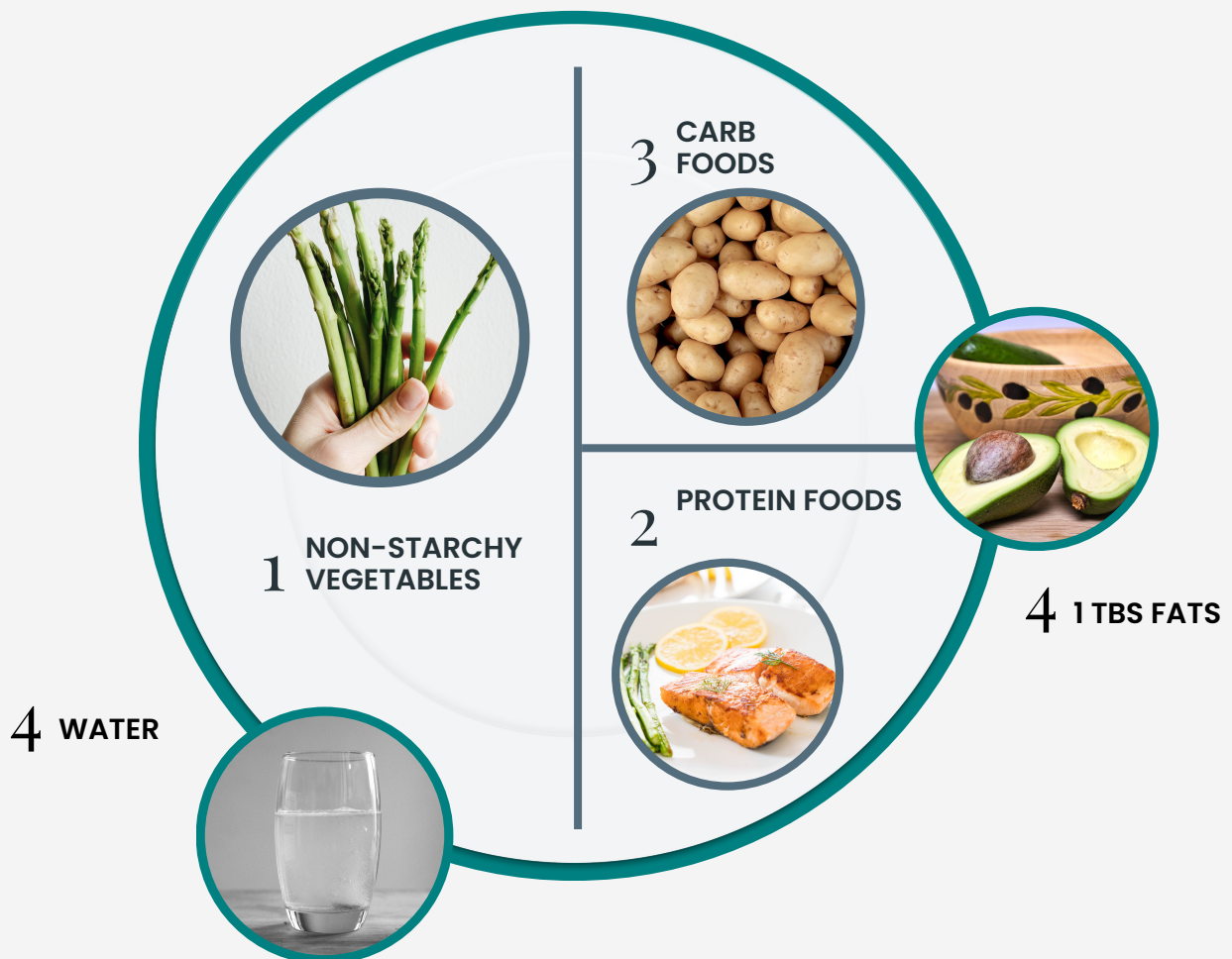
Women should aim for a portion approximately the size of their fist, while men can opt for two fist-sized portions.

## Carbohydrates

A single cupped-hand portion for women. Two cupped-hand portions for men.

## Healthy Fats

One thumb-sized portion for women and two thumb-sized portions for men.



# Your Guide to Portions & Planning Meals

Understanding portion control is important when planning meals. This helps to ensure a balanced intake of macronutrients and essential nutrients while minimizing excessive consumption of sugary foods

## Choose The Right Plate Size

Opt for a smaller, 9-inch plate to manage portion sizes effectively.

## Use Your Plate as a Guide

### **HALF THE PLATE FOR NON-STARCHY VEGETABLES**

Fill 50% of your plate with a variety of colourful, low-glycemic, nutrient-dense vegetables.

### **A QUARTER OF THE PLATE FOR GRAINS/COMPLEX CARBS**

Allocate 25% of your plate for whole grains, legumes, or starchy vegetables, focusing on high-fibre options.

### **A QUARTER OF THE PLATE FOR PROTEINS**

Dedicate 25% of your plate to lean protein sources, such as lean meats, poultry, fish, or plant-based alternatives.

### **MEASURING HEALTHY FATS**

Use 1-2 inches to portion healthy fats like nuts, seeds, avocado, or olive oil.

# Use Your Hand as a Portion Guide

*Using your hands is a simple way to estimate portion sizes without measuring tools.*

*Here's a rough guide for meal portion sizes using your hands:*

## **HIGH-PROTEIN FOODS**

One palm-sized serving is recommended for women, while men should aim for two palm-sized portions. Choose from options like meat, fish, poultry, and beans.

## **VEGETABLES AND SALADS**

Women should aim for a portion approximately the size of their fist, while men can opt for two fist-sized portions.

## **HIGH-CARB FOODS**

A single cupped-hand portion is suitable for women, while men can opt for two cupped-hand portions, focusing on whole grains and starchy vegetables as primary sources.

## **HIGH-FAT FOODS**

One thumb-sized portion for women and two thumb-sized portions for men, consisting of foods such as butter, oils, and nuts.

## **Hydration and Beverages**

It's important to stay hydrated by selecting suitable drink options for diabetes management. Water is the ideal choice as it contains neither calories nor carbohydrates and does not impact blood sugar levels. Other zero- or low-calorie drink alternatives to consider are:

- Unsweetened tea (served hot or iced)
- Unsweetened coffee (served hot or iced)
- Sparkling water or club soda

# Non-Starchy Vegetables Guide

Incorporating non-starchy vegetables into your diet is essential for maintaining overall health and well-being. These vegetables offer a rich source of essential nutrients while keeping calorie and carbohydrate intake in check. Aim to fill half of your plate with these, or follow the hand guide.

Consuming non-starchy vegetables like broccoli, carrots, and cauliflower can help you to feel full for an extended period without compromising your dietary goals.

Additionally, these vegetables nourish the gut, as they are rich in fibre that supports a healthy microbiome. Including these nutritious options in your meals contributes to a balanced, diverse diet that promotes optimal health and fosters a thriving gut environment.

- Asparagus
- Bok choy
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Capsicums
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Collard greens
- Chilli
- Cucumber
- Eggplant
- Endive
- Green beans
- Kale
- Lettuce
- Okra
- Peas
- Mixed greens
- Rocket
- Snow peas
- Spaghetti squash
- Spinach
- Sugar snap peas
- Swiss chard
- Tomatoes
- Zucchini



# Lean Proteins Guide

Protein plays a crucial role in a meal plan for individuals with diabetes. Aim for a palm-sized portion or fill 1/4 of your plate with protein-rich foods to ensure you consume an appropriate amount of protein.

Whether you follow a plant-based diet or consume animal products, it's essential to include adequate protein in your meals to support your overall health and effectively manage your diabetes.

- Beans (also contain carbs)
- Cheddar Cheese
- Chicken
- Clams
- Cod
- Cottage cheese
- Deli ham, turkey, beef
- Edamame
- Eggs
- Falafel (also contains carbs)
- Flank steak
- Hummus
- Beef tenderloin
- Pork tenderloin
- Lentils
- Lobster
- Mussels
- Nuts
- Plant-based meat substitutes
- Prawns
- Salmon
- Scallops
- Sirloin steak
- Tempeh
- Tilapia
- Tofu
- Tuna
- Turkey



# Carbohydrates Guide

Including carbohydrates in your diet is essential to maintaining a balanced and nutritious meal plan. Carbohydrates are a primary energy source for the body and play a significant role in supporting brain function, muscle growth, and overall health.

When selecting carbohydrates, it's important to focus on whole grains, legumes, fruits, and starchy vegetables, which provide vital nutrients and fibre.

By choosing high-quality carbohydrate sources and incorporating them in appropriate portions, you can enjoy the benefits of sustained energy and improved well-being while effectively managing your dietary goals.

## Not all carbs are created equally!

The type of carbohydrates we eat will also affect our blood glucose levels. The Glycemic Index (GI) is a tool that measures how different types of carbohydrates affect our blood glucose levels. It is a scientifically proven way to determine which carbohydrate foods are healthiest for us.

Carbohydrates with a **high** GI (70+) are digested and absorbed quickly, causing a rapid spike in blood glucose levels.

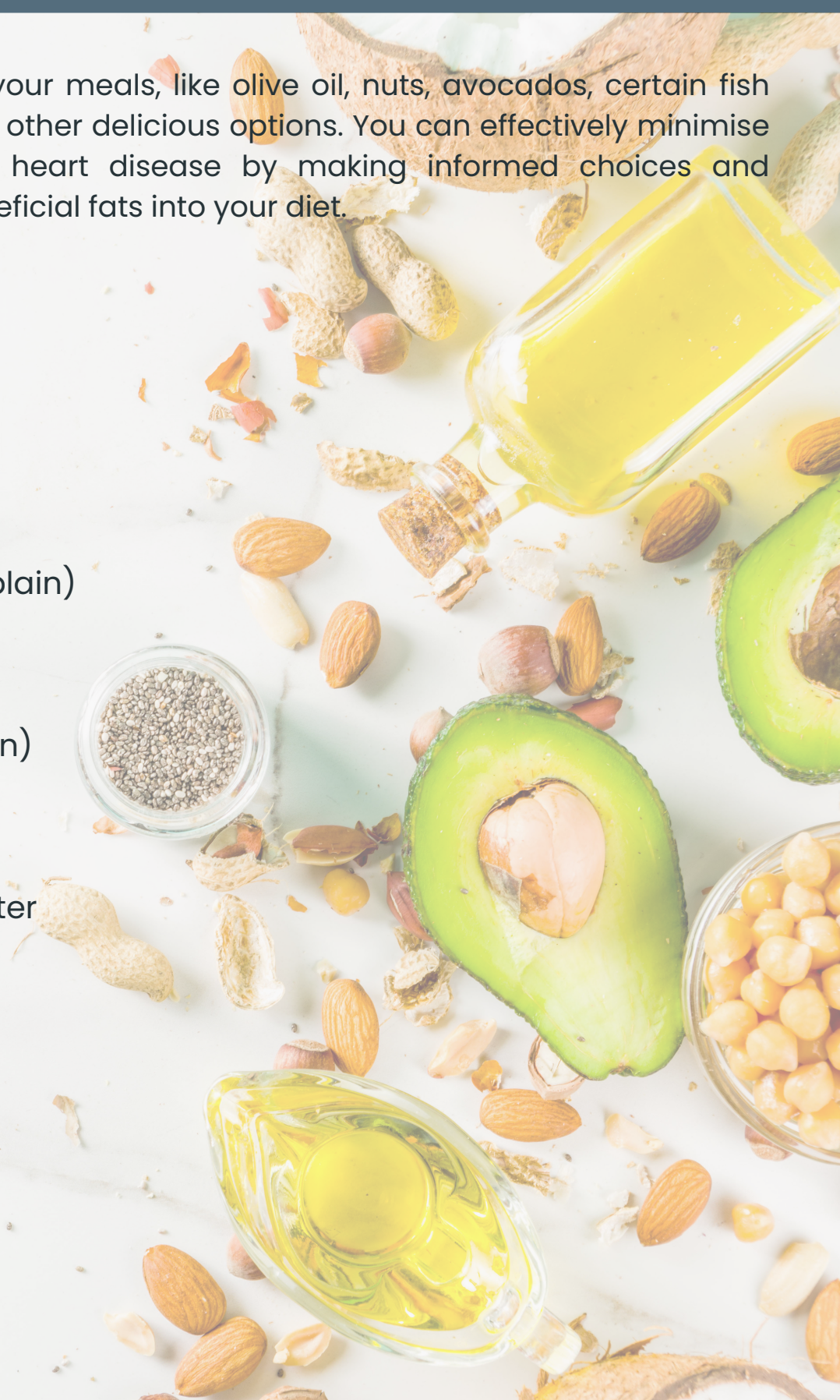
Carbohydrates with a **medium** GI (55- 69) are digested and absorbed at a moderate rate, causing a moderate rise in blood glucose levels.

Carbohydrates with a **low** GI (55 or less) are digested and absorbed more slowly at a slower rate, prompting less fluctuation in blood sugars.

# Healthy Fats Guide

Include healthy fats in your meals, like olive oil, nuts, avocados, certain fish varieties, and numerous other delicious options. You can effectively minimise the risk of developing heart disease by making informed choices and incorporating these beneficial fats into your diet.

- Almonds
- Almond butter
- Avocado
- Avocado oil
- Cashews
- Cashew butter
- Chia seeds
- Coconut yoghurt (plain)
- Dark chocolate
- Extra virgin olive oil
- Flaxseeds
- Greek yoghurt (plain)
- Hemp seeds
- Macadamia nuts
- Kefir (plain)
- Natural peanut butter
- Olives
- Pecans
- Pistachios
- Pumpkin seeds
- Sardines
- Sunflower seeds
- Tahini
- Walnuts
- Wild salmon



# Breakfast Ideas

## **CHIA OATS WITH KIWI FRUIT**

Cook the oats and chia seeds with water, then top with sliced kiwi fruit and sprinkled with cinnamon.

## **CHIA SEED PUDDING**

Whisk chia seeds with unsweetened almond milk, vanilla extract, and a touch of cinnamon. Use monk fruit as a sweetener (if desired), as this tends to raise blood glucose levels less than other sugar options. Let the mixture sit overnight and top with fresh berries in the morning.

## **COTTAGE CHEESE AND FRUIT**

Cottage cheese topped with diced green apple and chopped walnuts. Sprinkled with cinnamon.

## **COTTAGE CHEESE EGG BOWL**

Cottage cheese, two boiled eggs, a cupped handful of grape tomatoes and sliced cucumber.

## **GREEK YOGHURT WITH BERRIES AND NUTS**

Mix plain Greek yoghurt with a small handful of your favourite berries and a sprinkle of nuts like almonds or walnuts. Add a dash of cinnamon for its benefits of helping to stabilise blood sugar.

## **OVERNIGHT OATS**

Layer rolled oats, unsweetened almond milk, plain Greek yoghurt, chia seeds, and your choice of berries. Add monk fruit as a sweetener, which tends to raise blood glucose levels less than other sugar options. Refrigerate overnight and enjoy in the morning.

## **POACHED EGGS AND AVOCADO TOAST**

Toast one slice of whole-grain bread and top it with mashed avocado, sesame seeds and 2 poached eggs. Add 2 celery sticks on the side.

## **VEGETABLE OMELETTE**

Make an omelette with whole eggs with a variety of vegetables such as spinach, capsicums, onions, and tomatoes. Add a little cheddar cheese for additional protein.

# Lunch Ideas

## **BABY KALE, CAPSICUM, SPINACH FRITTATA WITH CHERRY TOMATOES**

Cook the vegetables in a frying pan, then whisk in the eggs to cook into a frittata. Enjoy roasted sweet potatoes as a side dish.

## **BLT SALAD BOWL**

Cook the bacon and hard boil the eggs. In a bowl, arrange rocket with cherry tomatoes and diced avocado. Drizzle with an olive oil dressing and top with the bacon and boiled eggs.

## **GRILLED CHICKEN AND VEGETABLE SKEWERS**

Grill chicken and your favourite vegetables (e.g., capsicum, zucchini, cherry tomatoes) on skewers and serve with a side of whole-grain couscous or brown rice.

## **MEDITERRANEAN SALAD**

Mix chopped cucumbers, tomatoes, olives, red onions, and feta cheese in a bowl. Toss with a light dressing made from olive oil, lemon juice, and herbs. Top with chicken or salmon for additional protein.

## **QUINOA AND BLACK BEAN SALAD**

Combine cooked quinoa, black beans, corn, diced tomatoes, and avocado with a lemon/lime vinaigrette.

## **TUNA SALAD STUFFED CAPSICUM**

Prepare a salad with canned tuna, diced celery, chopped red onion, lemon juice and Greek yoghurt. Mix the ingredients, then stuff the mixture into a hollowed-out capsicum.

## **TURKEY AND AVOCADO LETTUCE WRAPS**

Use large lettuce leaves as a wrap and fill them with sliced turkey, avocado, and a small amount of grated cheddar cheese.

## **ROASTED VEGETABLE AND CHICKPEA SALAD**

Roast your favourite vegetables and toss them with cooked chickpeas, a light vinaigrette, and some mixed greens.

## **SALMON AND MIXED GREENS SALAD**

Top a bed of mixed greens with grilled or baked salmon, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, and avocado.

# Dinner Ideas

## **BALSAMIC ROASTED TEMPEH BUDDHA BOWL**

Use tamari, olive oil, garlic and fresh ginger as a marinade and place a vegetable mixture with diced tempeh into the bowl. Leave to marinate and then oven roast on one pan until crispy. Serve on a bed of spinach and arugula.

## **CRISPY TOFU AND BROWN RICE**

Marinate the tofu using tamari and olive oil. Oven roast, then serve with cooked brown rice, grated carrots, sliced green onions and mixed greens.

## **FISH TACO BOWLS**

Pan-fry cod fillets in olive oil, turmeric, garlic powder and lemon juice. Serve on a bowl of chopped romaine lettuce, chopped cilantro, sliced avocado and diced mango.

## **MUSHROOM AND LEEK SOUP**

Saute diced leeks, onions and mushrooms in a pan with olive oil. Stir in coconut milk (from a can) and add seasonings like fresh dill. Once cooked, remove from the heat and add a small amount of miso paste for additional flavour and gut nourishment—season with black pepper.

## **SPICY BEEF WITH WILD RICE AND SAUTEED SPINACH**

Pan-fry the beef with paprika, curry powder, cumin, onions and garlic until brown and cooked through. Season with salt and pepper and serve with cooked wild rice and sauteed baby spinach.

## **STEAK, ROASTED MINI POTATOES AND SAUTEED BRUSSELS SPROUTS**

Roast the mini potatoes in olive oil in the oven. Sear the steak in a cast iron pan, then cook to your preference. Remove the steak once cooked and allow it to rest. In the meantime, add sliced Brussels sprouts and asparagus in the same pan and saute in minced garlic and lemon juice.

## **STEAMED FISH WITH STEAMED GREENS**

Steamed your choice of fish, such as salmon or cod, and serve with steamed broccoli, green beans, or spinach. Add cooked quinoa as a grain option.

# Salad Dressings

Making your own salad dressings can be a great way to enjoy a delicious blend of flavours without the added sugars often found in store-bought versions. With fresh, natural ingredients, homemade dressings offer a healthy and tasty alternative that perfectly complements your salad ingredients while helping you maintain a balanced sugar intake.

Combine all ingredients in a high-speed blender and puree each dressing into a liquid. Store dressings in a glass jar in the fridge. Enjoy!

## Classic Balsamic Vinaigrette

- 3 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Salt and pepper, to taste

## Lemon Herb Dressing

- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh herbs
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Salt and pepper, to taste

## Greek-Style Dressing

- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Salt and pepper, to taste

## Sesame Ginger Dressing

- 1/4 cup rice vinegar
- 2 tbsp tamari
- 1 tbsp grated fresh ginger
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

## Creamy Avocado Dressing

- 1 ripe avocado, peeled and pitted
- 1/4 cup fresh lime juice
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh coriander
- Salt and pepper, to taste



# The Glycemic Index (GI)

***The Glycemic Index (GI) scale illustrates the degree and rate at which carbohydrate-rich foods impact blood sugar levels. GI scores range from 0 to 100. Foods with a lower GI ranking have a lesser effect on blood sugar levels compared to those higher on the scale.***

***Foods with a low glycemic index are typically classified as those with a GI value of 55 or lower.*** These low-GI foods cause a slower and more gradual rise in blood sugar levels, which can help control blood sugar and overall health.

***Medium glycemic index (GI) foods have a GI value ranging from 56 to 69.*** These foods cause a moderate rise in blood sugar levels compared to low-GI foods, and their impact on blood sugar levels is not as rapid as high-GI foods.

***High glycemic index (GI) foods have a GI value of 70 or higher.*** These foods cause a rapid and significant rise in blood sugar levels compared to low and medium-GI foods. Consuming high-GI foods in moderation and balancing them with low and medium-GI foods can help control blood sugar.



# The Glycemic Index (GI)

## LOW GLYCEMIC INDEX FOODS

Artichokes	Eggplant	Peas
Asparagus	Grain breads	Quinoa
Avocado	Green beans	Soy milk
Barley	Green peas	Strawberries
Broccoli	Green leafy vegetables	Sweet potatoes
Brown rice	Lentils	Tomatoes
Brussels sprouts	Low-fat yoghurt	Walnuts
Buckwheat	Muesli (unsweetened)	
Capsicum	Non-starchy vegetables	
Cauliflower	Oat bran	
Chickpeas	Oats (steel-cut or rolled)	

## MEDIUM GLYCEMIC INDEX FOODS

Apricots	Kiwi fruit	Rye bread
Basmati rice	Mango	Spaghetti (whole wheat)
Beets	Millet	Sweet corn
Bran cereal	Oatmeal cookies	Tangerines
Cantaloupe	Orange juice (unsweetened)	Turkish apricots
Cornmeal	Parsnips	Wheat germ
Couscous	Pita bread (whole wheat)	Whole grain crackers
Cranberry juice (unsweetened)	Polenta	Whole grain rye crispbread
Fresh pineapple	Potatoes COOLED	Yam
Grapes	Raisins	

## HIGH GLYCEMIC INDEX FOODS

Bagels (white)	Doughnuts	Rice cakes
Baked potatoes	French fries	Rice Krispies
Banana (Brown, ripe)	Fruit roll-ups	Soft drinks
Carrots	Gatorade or other sports drinks	Sugary breakfast cereals
Cheerios	Instant oatmeal	Table sugar (sucrose)
Corn flakes	Instant rice	Watermelon
Cornbread	Jelly beans	White bread
Crackers (saltine)	Naan bread	White rice
Croissants	Pretzels	White pasta




# Work With Me

If you're ready to pursue a healthier version of yourself, I'm here to support you in every possible way.

Take the first step towards an empowering change by booking a consultation with me.


I am here to assist you along the journey!


*Sharon*

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BOOKINGS

