Glycemic Index Sideshow

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of the health system

ANOTHER DIET REVOLUTION BLOWN OUT OF THE WATER

You've probably seen the books - where the words 'revolutionary', 'new', 'glycemic' and 'index' all appear in the same paragraph.

Let's get something clear from the outset. The concept of the glycemic index is not new and it's certainly stretching the definition of the word to say that it's 'revolutionary'.

Whilst all of the popular 'low carb' (not 'no carb') diets are, in essence, low glycemic index diets - meat-fish-chicken etc, combined with low energy-density carbohydrates, particularly vegetables and fruit - too many glycemic index diets are composed of bread and pasta.

In short the glycemic index bar has been set too high. There's a lot more to consider when you eat than the glycemic index.

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john.miller@millerhealth.com.au
61 424 391 749
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MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Nearly 150 years ago, William Banting lost weight with a low glycemic index diet.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Banting

40 years ago, this was how Lelord Kordel structured his diet. Jean Nidetch (Weight Watchers), Robert Atkins, Barry Sears (Zone Diet), Bill Phillips (Body for Life), Michael and Mary Eades (Protein Power), the CSIRO and countless others have all done the same.

Go to the Diet Bookshelf at the Health and Fitness Bookstore and see for yourself.

http://www.fitandhealthyonline.com/bookstore/index.htm

If you're not familiar with the Hourglass eating concept, buy some books. Protein Power is about the best one to start with.

William Banting's Diet (1864) (Losing 46lb)	
Breakfast:	Four or five ounces of beef, mutton, kidneys, broiled fish, bacon or cold meat of any kind except pork. One small biscuit or one ounce of dry toast. A large cup of tea without milk or Sugar.
Lunch:	Five or six ounces of any fish except salmon, any meat except pork, any vegetable except potato. Any kind of poultry or game. One ounce of dry toast. Fruit. Two or three glasses of good claret, sherry or Madeira. (Champagne, port and beer were forbidden.)
Tea:	Two or three ounces of fruit. A rusk or two. A cup of tea without milk or sugar.
Supper:	Three or four ounces of meat or fish as for lunch. A glass of claret, or two. Night-cap (if required): A tumbler of gin, whisky or brandy with water but without sugar, or a glass or two of claret or sherry.
In terms of calories this diet adds up to the astonishing figure of 2,800. An average modern low-calorie reducing diet allows a meagre 1,000 calories a day. There must therefore have been something other than calorie reduction responsible for Banting's weight loss. What was the secret? In his own words: 'I can now confidently say that QUANTITY of diet may be safely left to the natural appetite; and that it is the QUALITY only which is essential to abate and cure corpulence.'	

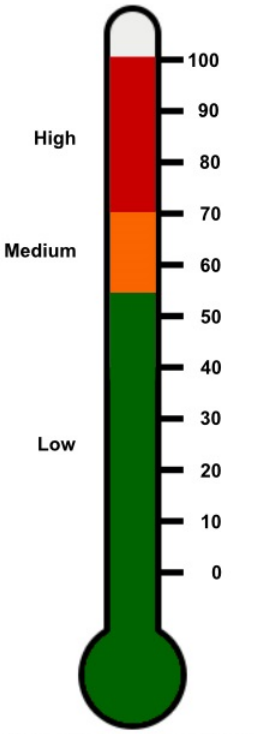
THE GI SIDE SHOW

As I see it, there are ten reasons to suggest that the GI model, (concept or theory) about how to eat wisely is a side show.

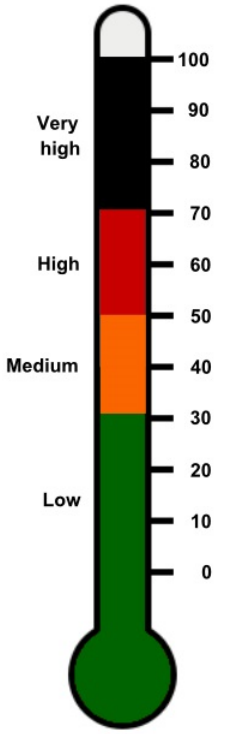
1. The first and most significant reason is that the low glycemic index bar has been set too high. The 'Official' standard for the glycemic index is

- low GI is less than 55
- medium GI is 56 - 69
- high GI is 70 or more

Sneaking under the bar is all manner of junk food - chocolate (43), corn chips (42) and Coca Cola (53).



Glycemic Index Foundation
Glycemic Index Barometer



Hourglass Diet
Glycemic Index Barometer

My own standard has the low GI bar set at 30.

70+	Very high
50 - 69	High
30 - 49	Moderate
Less than 30	Low

I wrote to Norganic Foods, manufacturers of a 'low GI' breakfast muesli to ask them what the actual GI content of their Crunchola product. They said it was 'low; and defined the GI standards that they use as

- low is less than 40
- medium is 40 - 50
- high is more than 50.

The problem with the 'official' standards set by the Glycemic Index Foundation, are that if 'low GI' is good, then 'medium GI' is not bad, which means that the current rash of glycemic index books read like an apology for industries that refine cereals into manufactured food - bread, pasta, breakfast biscuits, white rice ..., and foods with added sugar. It's a last ditch attempt to make manufactured, cereal-based foods appear respectable.

The dieticians and the Heart Foundation should be moving heaven and earth to steer people away from eating anything that comes in a cardboard box or a plastic bag.

This glycemic nonsense is just encouraging people to eat junk food.

2. When you read the GI books you'll detect that there is a dichotomy between what are low glycemic index foods and those that make up the bulk of the menus. You have to dig hard to find meals designed around the lowest of the GI foods, fat and protein. Here are some no GI foods.

Beef	0	Broccoli	0
Lamb	0	Cabbage	0
Pork	0	Cauliflower	0
Tuna	0	Cucumber	0
Eggs	0	French beans	0
Avocado	0	Spinach	0

You could make a pretty good meal out of all that - breakfast, lunch or tea!

Unless you're one of the few people who likes left-overs for breakfast and takes left-overs for lunch, the cooked breakfast and cooked lunch have pretty much gone the way of button-up boots. The diet industry suggestions for breakfasts, are, generally speaking, flour and sugar mixed up with milk, orange juice and coffee. It's a diet long removed from the prairies of North America, the jungles of Africa and the deserts of Australia.

Despite the need to obtain about 20% of our calorie intake in the form of fat, the menus are usually low in fat, filled with '97% fat free' testimonials. No wonder there is an epidemic of poor health in the community.

Everyone's drinking skim milk these days because the fat police have convinced everyone that ordinary milk is high in fat. Well hello! Ordinary milk has about 4% fat. That's low fat to begin with. It has a GI of 31.

One of the reasons for the success of the low-carb diets is the recognition that eating foods with a GI of lower than 30 not only helps people to lose weight but also helps to get the right balance between insulin and cortisol in the blood stream. It also stimulates the production of glucagon which stimulates fat loss.

3. Let's not forget that many of the foods currently listed as low and medium GI are the root of all manner of body system dysfunctions. I think I'll drink more chocolate milk. With a GI of 43 it must be good!

4. The GI concept doesn't make clear enough the distinction between eating fresh and natural food and junk food. Fresh food should always take precedence over junk food. As it stands a handful of peanut M&M's (33) looks a better food choice than a handful of raisins (64).

Here's how to eat wisely on a junk food diet (according to the glycemic index published in ***'The New Glycemic Revolution - complete guide to GI values'*** by Brand-Miller et al.) Really looks like a well balanced diet to me! Kids'll love it.

Wild berry Fruity Bix™ bar (51)	Nesquik ™ (35) 90% sugar.
Plain milk chocolate (43)	Milo™ (30) with skim milk.
Coca Cola™ (53)	Peanut M&M's® (33)
Corn chips, plain salted (42)	Nutella® (33)
Ice-cream, premium ultra chocolate (37)	Snickers bar® (41)
Frosties™ sugar coated Cornflakes (55)	Milky bar® (44)
Vanilla cake with icing (42)	Sustagen® (43) 54% sugar

5. There are more factors involved in choosing foods to nourish the cells of your body than the GI. I wrote to the American Diabetic Association and they wrote back saying'

'The American Diabetes Association does not recommend the use of the glycemic index as a primary strategy in food/meal planning. This is based on a review of over 20 studies in which subjects with type 1 or type 2 diabetes ingested a variety of starches or sucrose, both acutely and for up to 6 weeks, with no significant differences in glycemic responses if the amount of carbohydrate was similar.'

As I've already said, some foods have a higher propensity to stimulate body system dysfunction than others - particularly wheat flour and sugar. (In fact there should be a warning on the packet for these two.)

Some foods have high nutritional value and should be encouraged. But I betcha you'll have to wait a long time until you see lambs fry, tripe, brains or kidneys on any of the GI menus.

Vegetables should be promoted for all they're worth, instead of the usual ploughman's loaf and Basmarti (Barry and Martin) Rice.

Some of the manufactured foods are full of rubbish, designed to make them last longer, look better and taste sweeter. With respect to looking better and tasting sweeter that's just another nutritional hoax designed to deceive fools and children. The manufactured foods are frequently packed to the gunnels with food additives - flavourings, preservatives, colourings, emulsifiers, fillers, sugar, aspartame ..., and calories. They are frequently the foods to which large numbers of people are intolerant or allergic.

And yet, when you rake through all the lists of foods in the GI books, the manufactured junk foods are the most prominent. Even some of the foods that no one in their right mind would recommend to their worst enemy come up smelling like roses underneath the GI veneer of respectability. (You can bet that pretty soon you'll see packets of chocolate confectionery with the words LOW GI printed on the packet.)

The best diet advice you can give anyone about diet is to tell them to eat food which is fresh and natural, and be circumspect about, or lay off the manufactured stuff that comes in a colourful packet.

Just saying 'No' to wheat flour and sugar would make a big difference to a lot of people's lives.

6. The GI concept doesn't take into account the difference in energy density between the various carbohydrate groups, vegetables, fruit, unrefined cereals, refined cereals and sugar.

You can still eat recommended 'low and medium GI' foods and fatten yourself up. Just take a look at the energy density of pasta compared with apples. Or look at the energy density of a Jatz biscuit next time you're in the supermarket. At over 1900Kj/100gms this is a high energy wallop. A Ritz biscuit is over 2300Kj/100gms. (And you don't just have one at a time do you?)

When I looked more closely at the side panel on the Norganic Cruchola museli, I noticed that it contained 25.2% sugar. Some of it is naturally occurring sugar from the fruit juice concentrate and diced apple. But strewth, if you want to eat sugar there are cheaper ways of doing it than buying breakfast muesli! The other thing the side panel reveals is that it contains 1640Kj/100gms. That's high density food in anyone's language, particularly when the humble, ordinary, every day, common or garden spud contains around 275Kj/100gms.

7. You've always got to watch the amount of food you're eating.

8. It doesn't take into account individual differences. The diet that keeps some individuals, cultures and regional groups fit, healthy and close to their ideal weight can have the opposite effect on others. Some people can exist quite comfortably on a diet high in garbohydrates. Many can't. They get fat and dysfunctional.

You only have to look at what happens to aboriginal populations to see what happens when they forsake their traditional diet for a Western diet of fat, flour and sugar.

9. The science behind the GI concept appears to be founded on the selective evidence-based research that promotes the view that we exist better, are healthier and more likely to be to our ideal weight if we eat a diet high in cereal based carbohydrates. That's why the bar has been set so high. There's plenty of research around to indicate that this view of the world is not the only one.

If it weren't for adherence to the high cereal-based carbohydrate principle, the authors could have simply told people not to eat any of the refined, cereal based, manufactured junk food with a GI above 50, turned off the light, left the room, shut the door and gone home.

In the workshop of ideas about how to eat to

- maintain good health
- nourish the cells of your body
- maintain a normal level of body fat
- fix up certain body system dysfunctions and
- stimulate the elimination system …

… the glycemic index, in its present form, standards, research base and application is yet another limp and useless nutritional tool.

The GI books are full of menu suggestions encouraging people to eat junk. You'll be agog with disbelief when you see that the recommended (junk) food for a day in the life of a diabetic includes

- breakfast of porridge with brown sugar, toast, orange juice and hot chocolate
- lunch of a sandwich on the run
- dinners of pasta, potato, pitta bread, a bread roll, chips and washed down with a glass of red wine,

… all just big glucose dumps, the net result of which is exacerbating rather than diminishing the condition they're supposed to alleviate.

Here's what the myth busters at Nestle have this to say about sugar and diabetes on the http://www.nestle.com.au website.

> Eating too much sugar causes type two diabetes
>
> 
>
> FALSE
>
> Even though one of the symptoms of diabetes is high levels of sugar (glucose) in the blood, eating sugar doesn't directly cause diabetes. Type two diabetes is a lifestyle disease caused by a number of things, such as family history, lack of exercise and becoming overweight or obese. Someone without the genetic predisposition would not develop diabetes, no matter how much sugar he/she consumed.

That was written by a dietician!

10. Finally, diabetics deserve better advice on nutrition (and, of course exercise). My advice to diabetics is to

- set your normal diet guidelines at a GI of 30 or below.
- be particularly circumspect about what you eat in the range between 30 - 50
- eschew food with GI of 50 and above
- consider eating 80% of your diet as raw food
- eat a protein and raw vegetation anchored breakfast, a protein anchored lunch and a protein anchored evening meal
- avoid sugar
- avoid eating foods with added sugar
- lay off the garbohydrates, (yep, that's a 'g' not a 'c') food containing a mixture of fat and flour, fat and sugar, flour and sugar or fat, flour and sugar
- avoid flour
- avoid manufactured food
- lay off alcohol and soft drinks of any description. (Only fat people drink diet sodas!)
- walk, shuffle or jog at least and an average of 4,000 steps a day.

Plus, anyone giving diabetics advice should, at the same time point out that a major cause of adult onset diabetes is insulin resistance in muscles due to lack of regular vigorous physical activity. Want to know more about the amount of exercise - what type, how often, how long and what effort level - that is needed to stimulate the uptake of glucose into the muscles?

The **Complete Fitness Workout** – combining aerobic fitness, strength and flexibility exercise- is an integral part of the Lifestyle Prescription which stands head and shoulders above all other prescriptions for keeping yourself fit and healthy.

SIDE SHOW ALLEY

As it stands the glycemic index theory is a sideshow, promoted by the proponents of the food pyramid who have perverted the course of nutrition through their devotion to foods manufactured from cereals.

GI Joe prepares for battle

.

GLYCEMIC INDICES

Breakfast biscuits		Bread		Cake	
Vita-Brits	68	Soya and Linseed	36	Cake, sponge	66
Weet-Bix	69	Wholegrain Pumpernickel	46	Cake, banana	67
Sultana Bran	73	Heavy Mixed Grain	45	Cake, pound	77
Branflakes	74	Whole Wheat	49	Pastry	84
Cheerios	74	Sourdough Rye	48	Pizza, cheese	86
Weetabix	74	Sourdough Wheat	54	Muffins	88
Coco Pops	77	Croissant	67	Cake, flan	93
Oats in Honey	77	Hamburger bun	61	Cake, angel food	95
Cornflakes	80	Pita, white	57	Croissant	96
Puffed Wheat	80	Wholemeal Rye	62	Crumpet	98
		White	71	Cake, sponge	66
		Bagel	72		

Vegetables		Fruit		Nuts	
Broccoli	10	Cherries	22	Peanuts	13
Cabbage	10	Plums	24	Walnuts	15
Mushrooms	10	Grapefruit	25	Cashew Nuts	25
Lettuce	10	Peaches	28	Nuts and Raisins	21
Onions	10	Prunes	29		
Eggplant	15	Peach, canned natural juice	30		
Cauliflower	15	Dried Apricots	32		
Tomatoes	15	Apples	34		
Green Beans	15	Oranges	40		
Raw Carrots	16	Strawberries	40		
Frozen Green Peas	39	Pears	41		
Boiled Carrots	41	Coconut Milk	41		
Frozen Sweet Corn	47	Banana	42		
New Potatoes	54	Grapes	43		
Baked Potatoes	60	Coconut	45		
Beetroot	64	Kiwi Fruit	47		
Pumpkin	75				

THE NUTELLA FILES

Nutella graphic

THE GLYCEMIC INDEX
(33)

THE COMMERCIAL

'There's a lot to experience in the life of a child
Lots of energy to expend...
To play, to dream, to concentrate
So much energy... to try and try again
To learn to grow up

To discover the world
[Voiceover]
Hazelnuts and skimmed milk:

Nutella - it takes energy to be a kid'

You may have seen this commercial. Kids need lots of energy and Nutella is a great source for it.

Just how much energy children need these days is open to conjecture. If they're sitting around playing computer games and watching videos, not much. That's why (like their parents) they're getting fatter.

Just how much energy comes from Nutella isn't spelt out in the commercial.

THE REALITY
Nutella contains 2175 Kj per 100 grams, derived principally from 30% fat and 54% sugar.

You may as well spread chocolate on your child's toast.

The commercial also implies that Nutella is mainly hazelnuts and milk. Packed full of hazelnuts and skim milk it must be good. However, hazelnuts only make up 13% of Nutella, and skimmed milk makes up less than 7%. They don't tell you that either.

So what are the principal ingredients?

30% is palm oil, high in palmitic acid which the World Health Organization claims is convincingly linked to increased risk of cardiovascular disease.

54% is sugar, pure, white and deadly.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