eat right LIVE WELL

Cravings? Hunger?

Could glycemic index be the answer?

We have been searching for the answers to questions like, "Why am I starving an hour after I eat?" and "Why do I crave certain foods when I'm not even hungry?" for years. A recent study suggests that the glycemic index of the foods we eat may be responsible.

What are Glycemic Index and Glycemic Load?

Glycemic Index, or GI for short, refers to the impact a single food has on our blood sugar as compared to a control– usually glucose or white bread. The lower the GI, the lesser the impact on blood sugar, and the higher the GI, the greater the impact on blood sugar. Because GI scores of a food are based on a standard amount of carbohydrates, not the amount found in a typical serving, Glycemic Load, or GL, converts the GI to a number that is relevant to a typical serving. For example, carrots may have a GI of 50, but they only have a GL of 2 when looking at a typical serving.

What do GI and GL mean in real life?

If you are eating a food by itself, GI or GL could help you determine how satisfied you may feel a few hours after eating the food. Some studies have suggested that eating meals made up of lower GI foods may reduce hunger and cravings. If you are eating the food with other foods or even something as simple as a topping (butter on a baked potato for example), however, the GI and GL become less relevant. This is because adding fat, protein or other types of carbohydrates can greatly change the impact of the overall meal on our blood sugar.

Bottom Line

GI and GL are still mostly used in research settings. If you are considering using GI or GL to determine the foods that you eat, remember that the combination of foods eaten in a single meal can be as, or possibly more, important than the GI of the individual foods alone. If your goal is to lower the overall impact on your blood sugar, it may be as simple as combining carbohydrate foods with protein or fat containing foods instead of eating them alone.

REFERENCES:

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Written by: Jennifer M. Ignacio, MS, RD, July 2013.

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