Carbohydrates and the Glycemic Index: "Slow" Carbs vs. "Fast" Carbs

Not all carbohydrates are created equal.

"Fast" Carbohydrates

Some carbohydrates increase the blood sugar by a lot very quickly. These types of carbohydrates are usually refined grains or foods/drinks that only contain sugar without any fat or protein.

Sometimes it is good to increase the blood sugar quickly, such as when you have a low blood sugar less than 70 mg/dL. However, most of the time we want to avoid sharp spikes in blood sugar because it makes it hard to control your blood sugar overall.

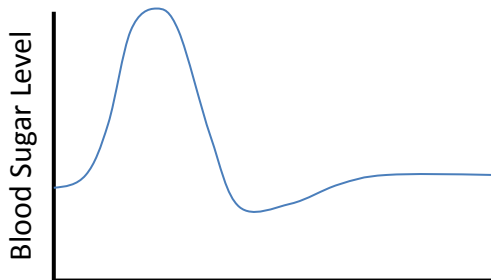| Fast Carbs	Slow Carbs
Juice	Whole fruit
Regular soda	Milk
White bread	Whole grain bread
White rice	Brown rice
Hard candy	Dark chocolate
Corn flakes	Raisin Bran
Rice	Beans

"Slow" Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates that are eaten with fiber, protein, or fat cause a slow, steady rise in blood sugar. The fiber, protein, and fat helps slow digestion and absorption of these carbohydrates and helps you stay full for longer and prevent large spikes or drops in blood sugar. Try to eat carbohydrates with more fiber in them, such as whole fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and beans or lentils.
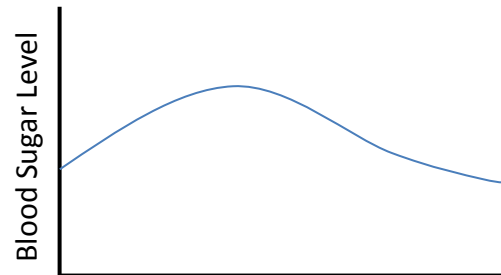
The **amount** of carbohydrates you eat also determines the effect on your blood sugar.

Grams eaten	Rise in Blood Sugar
1 gram =	↑4 mg/dL
10 grams =	↑40 mg/dL
100 grams =	↑400 mg/dL

Effect of "Fast" Carbs
Ex: Juice, soda, hard candy

Effect of "Slow" Carbs
Ex: Beans, vegetables, fruit

Tips to slow down your carbohydrates:

- Always combine your *carbohydrates with a protein* and/or a fat, like meat, cheese, or nuts.
- Choose *100% whole grain* products over white, or refined, products.
- Eat *whole fruits* instead of drinking juice.
- *Include fiber* at each meal by eating vegetables, beans and lentils, and whole grains.
- *Avoid instant* foods when possible (instant mashed potatoes, pudding, rice, oatmeal, etc).
- *Spread carbohydrates out* throughout the day and don't "overload" yourself at one time.