

GI News—May 2008



- Eating the Okinawan way
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- Should you be eating eggs?
- Prof. Trim on skin and sin
- The real deal on 'lite' foods

For over 10 years, Bradley and Craig Willcox have been studying the people of Okinawa, Japan, the longest living (800 centenarians out of a population of 1.3 million) and healthiest people in the world. They describe the Okinawan diet as Japanese with salsa – mostly plant-based with plenty of fish and soy foods (tofu and miso) and a great variety of vegetables from sweet potato to leafy greens and bitter melons. And low GI. In this month's *GI News* they talk about the benefits of 'hara hachi bu' or eating until you are 80% full. There are all the usual features this month too, including four new recipes (try Kate's Wholemeal, Carrot and Poppy Seed Muffins), two enterprising success stories, new GI values and your questions answered. If you enjoy the success stories our readers share with us, you'll be pleased to hear we have put them all in one place in the right-hand column under 'Success Stories'.

Good eating, good health and good reading.

"A good coke [cook] is halfe a physycyon."

– Andrew Boorde, *Breviary of Health*, 1547

(Boorde was King Henry VIII's physician and a former monk)

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Food for Thought

Hara hachi bu – eat only until you are 80% full

'Far off in the East China Sea, between the main islands of Japan and Taiwan, is an archipelago of 161 beautiful, lush green islands known as Okinawa. The beaches are a dazzling powdery white; the waters are crystal turquoise, and the pristine subtropical rainforests house a huge variety of exotic flora and fauna. But while Okinawa has all the makings of a tropical paradise, it is in fact something more special – Okinawa is more like a "real-life Shangri-la" why? Because

the islands are home to the longest lived population in the world.' – *The Okinawa Diet Plan*



Dr Bradley Willcox

The traditional Okinawa diet, with its emphasis on vegetables, whole grains, fruits, legumes (soy foods) and fish with limited amounts of lean meats serves as a model for healthy eating and healthy aging that not only reduces your risk of cardiovascular disease but also helps to minimise free radical production. Free radicals are cell-damaging molecules that are generated mainly by our bodies' metabolism when we create energy from food.

Dr Bradley Willcox talked to *GI News* about the secrets of healthy aging in Okinawa. 'The Okinawan cultural habit of calorie control called *hara hachi bu*, which means eat only until you are 80% full, plays a role in as well as their habit of eating an antioxidant-rich, plant-based diet,' he said.

'Stopping at 80% capacity is actually a very good strategy to avoid obesity without going hungry because the stomach's stretch receptors take about 20 minutes to tell the body how full it really is and 20 minutes after stopping you will really feel full.

In Okinawa, heart disease rates are 80% lower, and stroke rates lower than in the US and other Western countries. Cholesterol levels are typically under 180 mg/dL (4.6 mmol/L), homocysteine levels are low and blood pressure at goal levels. Rates of many cancers are 50–80% lower – especially breast, colon, ovarian and prostate cancer. Hip fractures are 20% lower than mainland Japanese and 40% lower than in the US. Dementia is much rarer.

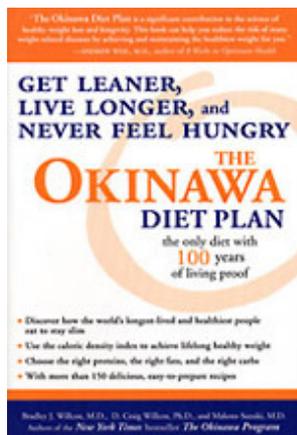


Ushi Okushima – 100 years old

However, Okinawans who adopt Western eating styles have similar rates of heart disease as in the US. Young Okinawans, eating more processed foods, have a higher risk of heart disease than their elderly relatives. A study of 100,000 Okinawans who moved to Brazil and adopted local eating habits, showed a life expectancy 17 years lower than in Okinawa.'

So what's the Okinawan secret?

- Consciously controlled portion sizes through the practice of hara hachi bu: eat until you are 80% full.
- A low-calorie, mostly plant-based diet with plenty of fish and soy foods, a great variety of vegetables as well as moderate amounts of the monounsaturated fats and omega-3's. Include high fibre whole grains and starches.
- Regular, life-long physical activity. Dancing, martial arts, walking and gardening are common forms of exercise.
- Staying lean and fit. The combination of diet and activity keeps body fat low (ie, BMI 18-22).



For more on the Okinawa diet, check out www.okinawadiet.com.

News Briefs

Low GI benefits for young people with type 1 diabetes

'A low GI diet may reduce glucose excursions and improve glycemic control in children with type 1 diabetes,' says Dr Tonja Nansel from the US National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, commenting on her pilot study published in *Diabetes Care* in April. She also made the point that 'this effect was observed despite the fact that the children used basal-bolus insulin regimens, in which their insulin dose was specifically matched to the amount of carbohydrate consumed'.

'In fact', she said, 'when you account for the differences in carbohydrate consumed due to treating low blood glucose and the differences in the amount of insulin taken due to treating high

blood glucose, the children actually had a greater number of carbs per unit of insulin when they ate the low GI diet – and they still showed better blood glucose levels’.

The study recorded blood glucose responses to low and high GI meals in 20 young people (aged 7–16) with type 1 diabetes using continuous blood-glucose monitoring. The study was carried out over five days in both a structured clinical setting and in the home environment. In their findings, the researchers report that the low GI diet resulted in significantly lower average daytime blood glucose. They noted that the fact that blood glucose levels were not different during the night time supports the understanding that a low GI diet affects blood glucose levels primarily by decreasing the rise in blood glucose that happens after eating. More mild hypos had to be treated on the low GI diet suggesting that there needs to be attention to safety in any major dietary changes and that a lower GI diet may reduce insulin requirements.

Dr Nansel explained that the benefits of improved blood glucose control for children with diabetes are substantial. ‘Many young people with diabetes and their families say that one of their biggest frustrations in managing diabetes is dealing with high blood glucose levels. The more the blood glucose is out of range, the more children are at risk for long-term health complications. Seeing a reading on their blood glucose meter that is considered “too high” can be a source of worry, and can even spark parent-child conflict. A way of eating that decreases these high blood glucose fluctuations could both improve long-term health for children with diabetes, and perhaps even decrease some of the stress of living with diabetes.’

Dr Tonja Nansel’s primary research interests are in the management of type 1 diabetes in children and their families, and in developing programs to promote healthful eating among families. To find out more about this study and her findings (including what the children actually ate, low GI foods such as brown basmati rice and black bean brownies), check out her presentation of the study’s findings at the [2007 ADA meeting](#).
– *Diabetes Care*, Volume 31, Number 4, April 2008



Dr Tonja Nansel

Bitter melons and blood glucose

Many plants have traditionally been used to treat type 2 diabetes. Indeed, along with diet, plant preparations formed the basis of treatment until the introduction of insulin in 1922. One fruit long associated with treating diabetes is bitter melon. Writing in *Phytomedicine* Raman Lau reported back in 1996 that ‘Unripe fruits, seeds and aerial parts of bitter melon (*Momordica charantia*) have been used in various parts of the world to treat diabetes.’

A team from Australia's Garvan Institute of Medical Research along with the Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica, reported in March *Chemistry and Biology* that they have uncovered bitter melon's therapeutic properties – four bioactive compounds that all appear to activate the enzyme AMPK, a protein that regulates the body's metabolism and affects glucose uptake. Exercise also activates AMPK in muscle, which in turn mediates the movement of glucose transporters to the cell surface, a very important step in the uptake of glucose from the circulation into tissues in the body. This is a major reason that exercise is recommended as part of the normal treatment program for someone with type 2 diabetes.

'We can now understand at a molecular level why bitter melon works as a treatment for type 2 diabetes,' said Prof David James, director of the diabetes and obesity program at the Garvan. 'By isolating the compounds we believe to be therapeutic, we can investigate how they work together in our cells.' Garvan scientists involved in the project, Drs Jiming Ye and Nigel Turner, stress that while there are well known diabetes drugs on the market that also activate AMPK, they can have side effects. 'The advantage of bitter melon is that there are no known side effects. Practitioners of Chinese medicine have used it for hundreds of years to good effect,' said Dr Ye. – *Chemistry and Biology*, [Vol 15\(3\), 263-273](#), 21 March



What are they and how do you use them?

Bitter melon also called bitter gourd and balsam pear is a cousin of squash, watermelon and cucumber. Native to the tropics, it's widely cultivated in Asia for its 'bubble-wrap' textured, green, immature fruit (12–30 cm long) that's stuffed, pickled, and sliced into various dishes, hot and cold. Like eggplant, it needs to be 'degorged' or salted first to take away the bitterness (this involves slicing it, salting the slices, then allowing them to drain in a colander or on a paper towel for 20 minutes or so before rinsing or blotting and patting dry). The young leaves and tips are also edible.

Our invaluable resource for all Asian food matters is Charmaine Solomon. She prefers her bitter melon fried to a golden brown as in her Fried Bitter Gourd Salad (see our recipes this month) rather than raw and sliced thinly in a salad, her jazz musician husband Reuben's favourite way. Check out Charmaine's *Encyclopedia of Asian Food* for recipes. There are also two or three recipes in *The Okinawa Diet Plan* as 'goya', its local name is popular in Okinawan cuisine. You'll find bitter melons in season in Asian produce markets and larger fruit and vegetable markets.

The tai chi factor

Two separate small but encouraging studies by researchers in Taiwan and Australia published online in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* in April report that simple tai chi exercises may help in managing type 2 diabetes. In the Taiwan study, Dr Kuender Yang and colleagues at Chang Gung Memorial Hospital matched 30 middle-aged and older adults with type 2 diabetes with a diabetes-free, age-matched 'control'. The participants were given a program of 37 standardised tai chi movements which they practised in 60 minutes training sessions three times a week – and were encouraged to continue at home. After 12 weeks, the 'control' group had no significant changes in any diabetes related parameters. The participants with type 2 diabetes, however, had a significant decline in their HbA1c level (a measure of long-term blood glucose control) and increased levels of anti-inflammatory interleukin-12 (which boosts immune response), while their T cell activity (a sign of health) also increased.

In the Australian study, Dr Xin Liu and colleagues at the University of Queensland designed a special tai chi/qigong program for 11 adults with elevated blood glucose. The participants exercised for 90 minutes, three times a week and were encouraged to practise at home (most did). After 12 weeks of regular exercise, the participants showed significant improvement in BMI, waist circumference and blood pressure. There was also a small improvement in HbA1c, fasting insulin and insulin resistance.

– *British Journal of Sports Medicine*: [Taiwan study](#)

– *British Journal of Sports Medicine*: [Australian study](#)



What's new?

Star foods: Selecting a winning team of foods for great health

By Dr Joanna McMillan Price and Judy Davie

‘What you eat has the power to influence the way you look, how you feel, how much energy you have, your ability to perform mental tasks, your ability to exercise, and your general state of happiness – and that’s before we even start talking about lowering the risk of chronic disease,’ say Joanna and Judy. In *Star Foods*, this gorgeous and dynamic duo help you create your own winning team of star performing foods to maximise your chances of achieving and maintaining good health. There are more than 60 deliciously healthy recipes including the following great tasting, quick meal packed with nutritional goodies.

Sardine, avocado and capsicum grill

12 sardine fillets	2 tablespoons capers
Olive oil	Black pepper
Juice of 1/2 lemon	1 cup rocket leaves
4 slices whole grain bread, toasted	1 roasted capsicum, sliced
1 avocado	

- Brush the sardines with olive oil and a sprinkle of lemon juice. Heat a grill pan and cook sardines for 3–4 minutes on one side only.
- Spread each slice of toast with avocado and sprinkle capers over the top. Season with black pepper and a little more lemon juice.
- Lay the rocket over the avocado. Top with sardines and sliced capsicum and serve.

Per serve

1472 kJ/ 350 calories; 15 g protein; 21 g fat (includes 5 g saturated fat); 23 g carbohydrate; 3.8 g fibre



Ride up the corporate ladder

Our New York publisher packs his bike before his toothbrush and rides everywhere, even on one notable occasion across Sydney in peak hour, from recollection in the pouring rain, to visit Sydney University's GI testing centre. Here are 10 top reasons to ride to work:

1. Stay healthy.
2. Save time, and get your daily dose of exercise.
3. Help save the environment.
4. Savour the great outdoors.
5. Parking is a breeze.
6. Enjoy the satisfaction of sailing past stationary cars.
7. Meet fellow commuters at lights and bike racks.
8. Save money.
9. Make the most of roads, bike tracks and shared pedestrian pathways to cross town.
10. Dream up new ventures.

– *Greenpages* Australia 2008



Food of the Month

Go nuts for life

Dietitian and Nuts for Life program manager says: ‘Bring back the Waldorf Salad – lettuce, apple, walnuts and dressing.’ We asked why.

‘Well, nuts are among the superheros of the modern day diet just as they were in Paleolithic times’ says Lisa. ‘They are a source of good fats, healthy protein and fibre, particularly soluble fibre, which improves blood glucose levels, helps insulin work more effectively, and lowers LDL cholesterol and triglyceride levels in people with diabetes. But you do have to be sensible about quantities (a serving is a handful (30–50 g/1–1¾ oz) and say no thanks to the tempting salted kinds.



Studies show:

1. Enjoying a handful of nuts 5–7 times a week can halve your risk of developing heart disease. Even people who eat nuts once a week have less heart disease than those who don’t eat any nuts. How come? It’s possible the unique combination of healthy fats, fibre,

antioxidants, arginine and plant sterols all working together give nuts their heart healthy benefits.

2. The arginine in nuts helps insulin work more effectively. It can also improve the overall health of blood vessels, helping prevent complications of diabetes.
3. The fibre and protein found in nuts can help satisfy the appetite for longer helping you cut back on picking when you get the munchies. Substitute a snack of nuts or a trail mix of nuts, seeds and dried fruit for biscuits, cakes, pastries and fried snack foods.'

Get more nuts into your day by:

- Sprinkling almonds or cashews through a stir fry.
- Roasting chestnuts or pine nuts and tossing them through a salad.
- Chopping walnuts or Brazils and add them to a dipping sauce.
- Crumbling pecans into yoghurt and serving with fruit or sprinkling chopped, roasted hazelnuts or almonds over low fat ice cream.
- Crumbling macadamias or pistachios over grilled fish.
- Adding roasted pine nuts to pasta dishes.
- Blending pistachios or macadamias with fresh herbs, parmesan and a little olive oil for pesto.

For more information on nuts and health visit www.nutsforlife.com.au or contact admin@nutsforlife.com.au

Low GI Recipes of the Month

Our chef Kate Hemphill develops deliciously simple recipes for *GI News* that showcase seasonal ingredients and make it easy for you to cook healthy, low GI meals and snacks. For more of Kate's fabulous fare, check out her website: www.lovetocook.co.uk. For now, prepare and share good food with family and friends.



Kate Hemphill

We thought it was time for some baking. Naturally we aim to give you recipes with as low a GI as possible, but with baking it's really hard to get into the low GI bracket. Basically, you just can't expect anything with refined flour to be low GI. But you can get it lower by adding carrots and sultanas as Kate has done here. To reduce the GI of these muffins even more, dietitian Kate

Marsh suggests you cut back the wholemeal or stoneground flour to 340 g (12 oz) and top up with 60 g (2 oz) unprocessed oat bran.

Wholemeal Carrot and Poppy Seed Muffins

I find bought muffins rarely satisfying, as they are too 'cakey', sweet or full of preservatives. Muffins can be whipped up in less than 30 minutes from start to finish, using two mixing bowls and a muffin tin. They freeze well and will keep in an airtight container for about 5 days. These wholemeal carrot muffins are really satisfying and full of natural sweetness and ideal for an occasional treat.



Makes 12

500 g (1 lb 2 oz) carrots, peeled, boiled and drained
150 ml (5 fl oz) vegetable oil
1 cup (250 ml) low-fat or skimmed milk
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1 tbsp runny honey (pure floral is best)
400 g (14 oz) wholemeal or stone ground flour
2 tsp baking powder
1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
2 tsp poppy seeds
100 g (3½ oz) soft brown sugar
1/2 tsp lemon zest
100 g (3½ oz) sultanas (or currants)

- Pre-heat the oven to 190°C/375°F.
- Mash or whiz the carrot to a puree and combine in a bowl with the milk, eggs and honey.
- Combine the flour, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda, poppy seeds, sugar, lemon zest and sultanas or currants in large bowl, then pour in the carrot mixture, stirring until well combined.
- Working quickly (the raising agents activate when meeting the liquid), pour the batter into a non-stick or greased 12-hole muffin tin.
- Bake for 20–25 minutes until golden. Remove from oven and gently take out muffins onto a wire rack (otherwise they will steam on the bottom).

Per muffin

1353 kJ/322 calories; 7 g protein; 14 g fat (includes 2 g saturated fat); 40 g carbohydrate; 5.5 g fibre

We asked Kate Marsh, author of *Low GI Gluten-free Living*, how to make this gluten-free friendly. Here's what she suggests: 'In place of wholemeal flour use brown rice flour plus some rice bran and psyllium husks. Maybe almond meal. The rest of the ingredients are OK but make sure the baking powder is gluten free.'

Charmaine Solomon's Bitter Melon Salad

If you love Asian food, check out the recipes on Charmaine's website:

www.charmainesolomon.com. This recipe was hard to provide a nutritional analysis for as bitter melons come in quite a range of sizes. We opted for 300 g (10 oz) melons. The saturated fat is mostly from the coconut cream, so to cut back, use a little less. Like other members of the squash family, bitter melons contain very little carbohydrate, so it's not possible to estimate a GI.

Serves 4

2 tender bitter melons

Salt

Ground turmeric

Peanut oil

3 golden shallots, sliced finely

2 fresh green chillies, seeded and sliced

2 tablespoons lime juice

½ teaspoon sugar

3 tablespoons coconut cream

- Wash and dry bitter melons. Cut crosswise into slices about into 6 mm (1/4 inch) thick. Lay them on a platter and sprinkle with salt and turmeric on one side, turn the slices over and sprinkle on the reverse side. Leave for 20 minutes, then blot dry with paper towels.
- Heat sufficient oil to just cover the base of a heavy frying pan and lay the bitter melon slices in the oil in one layer. Cook on medium heat until golden underneath, then turn the slices over and cook the other side. Transfer to paper towels with a slotted spoon to drain. Place in a serving dish and lightly mix with the shallots and chillies. Dissolve sugar in lime juice and pour over. Just before serving, spoon coconut cream over the salad.

Per serve

520 kJ/124 calories; 2 g protein; 11 g fat (includes 4 g saturated fat); 2 g carbohydrate; 2.8 g fibre

Lisa Yates Bircher muesli with mixed nuts

This muesli will keep well in the fridge for 2 or 3 days.

Serves 6



2 cups traditional rolled oats
1/3 cup sliced dried apricots
2 tablespoons sultanas
1½ cups (375 ml) apple juice
50 g (1¾ oz) raw pecans
50 g (1¾ oz) raw hazelnuts
50 g (1¾ oz) raw whole blanched almonds
50 g (1¾ oz) raw macadamias
1 medium red apple, halved and thinly sliced
½ cup (125 ml) low fat natural yoghurt
¼ cup (60 ml) skim milk
2 tablespoons honey (if desired)

- Place the rolled oats, apricots and sultanas in a bowl and pour over the apple juice. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
- Preheat oven to 180°C (350°F). Place all the nuts on a baking tray and bake for 5 minutes or until golden. Remove from oven, cool then chop roughly. Add the nuts to the rolled oat mixture, along with the apple, yoghurt and milk. Stir until completely combined. Serve with a drizzle of honey if desired.

Per serve

1810 kJ/430 calories; 10 g protein; 25 g fat (includes 2 g saturated fat); 43 g carbohydrate; 6 g fibre

Busting Food Myths with Nicole Senior

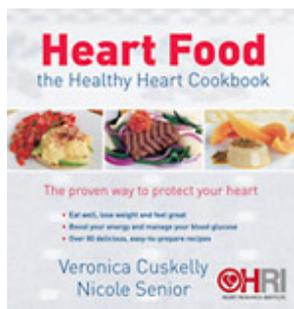
Myth: Eggs are bad for the heart.



Nicole Senior

Fact: Ever wondered why egg-white omelettes became so popular? Lord knows it wasn't for the flavour! It's a classic case of food egg-stremism resulting in the poor old egg copping a bad wrap. Eggs were shunned because of their cholesterol content, but looking a little deeper we find eating eggs is not linked with higher rates of heart disease. Although eggs contain cholesterol, eating eggs in moderation as part of a heart-friendly diet low in saturated fat will not adversely affect the blood cholesterol level of most people. Blood cholesterol levels are far more influenced by how much saturated and trans fat you eat than dietary cholesterol. A typical 50 g egg contains 5 g fat of which only 1.5 g is saturated. Eggs are full of vitamins and minerals such as vitamin A, E, folate and B12, antioxidants lutein and zeaxanthin that help maintain healthy eyes, and also contain long chain omega-3 fats (like the ones in fish).

However like most foods it appears you can have too much of a good thing. A recently published study of men suggested an increased of risk of death (interestingly not from cardiovascular disease) was associated with eating more than 1 egg a day, especially in men with diabetes. But more than one egg a day is egg-cessive any way you look at it. Yet again, the old nutrition wisdom prevails – enjoy everything in moderation. Everyone can enjoy eggs in moderation (around 3–4 eggs a week) in the context of a heart-friendly diet. Our tip is to enjoy them together with protective plant foods such as wholegrains, vegetables, legumes, fish, nuts and healthy oils. Think ... Egg, Beans and Mushrooms on Mixed Grain Muffins, or, Avocado Scrambled Egg (rather than a greasy fry-up with bacon, white toast, butter and salt!). For these and other egg-cellent recipes, check out any of the New Glucose Revolution low GI cookbooks, *Eat to Beat Cholesterol* or *Heart Food*.



Dietitian Nicole Senior is author of *Heart Food* and [Eat to Beat Cholesterol](#) available online from Dymocks.

Dr David's Tips for Raising Healthy Kids

Are your kids fussy eaters, or are they really full when they say they are?

There's no question about it, parents like to see clean plates at the end of dinner. And that's not surprising considering the effort that goes into preparing the meal and wanting to nourish your family. A recent report published in *Nutrition & Dietetics* in Australia, however, found that over 80% of Moms surveyed thought that their kids were fussy eaters if they left food on their plate.

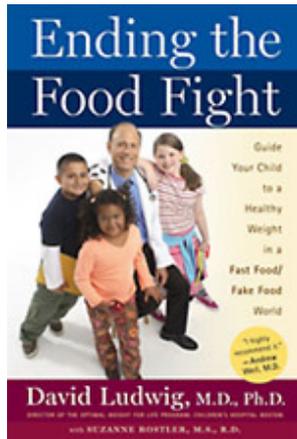


Photography by Ian Hofstetter

Don't worry, kids have a tremendous capacity to self-regulate their food intake to make sure they get the nutrition and energy they need. So, you can probably leave well alone if your child says he's full. And don't use dessert as a bribe.

No one has ever put the clean plate problem more succinctly than nutritionist Ellyn Satter: 'As parents we have the responsibility of choosing when, where, and what is available to our children. Our children have the responsibility of choosing how much and even whether they eat.'

Of course it's important to get the serving size right in the first place. So if you're wondering how much protein (meat, chicken, fish or legumes); cooked veggies or salad; or starchy veggies (potato or sweet potato) and wholegrains to put on the plate here's the tip we give our OWL families. Eyeball the serving sizes by dividing the dinner plate into three sections. Protein foods and wholegrains/starchy foods should each take up just a quarter of the plate. Cooked green veggies or salad veggies (or both) should fill the remaining half. Of course if you have sneaked heaps of veggies into the fish patties, the plate maths may be a bit harder. But relax and let you kids enjoy the family meal and don't fuss when they say they are full. Buon appetito.



– Dr David Ludwig is Director of the Optimal Weight for Life (OWL) program at Children’s Hospital Boston and author of [*Ending the Food Fight*](#)

Move It & Lose It with Prof Trim

Skin and Sin

Did you know that being fat can affect your skin as well as your gut? Excess body weight has been found to be associated with a form of low-level inflammation in blood vessels and cells throughout the body. It is this, which seems to be the link between obesity and certain forms of disease, like diabetes.



Obesity has also been shown to have an effect on skin, and a number of forms of skin damage, generally called ‘dermatitis’, are now associated with carrying extra weight. Many of these also have associated inflammation. Hence, the link between skin problems and being overweight (a) appears real and (b) could be linked through the inflammatory processes according to research published in the *Journal of the American College of Dermatology* 2007;56:901-916.

Problems include those that come from insulin resistance (like *acanthosis nigricans* or the brown patchy spots on skinfolds), infection (like *intertrigo* or itchiness in skin folds and under the feet); inflammation (like *psoriasis*) or metabolic problems (like *tophaceous gout*). There are also problems that result from the mechanical pressures of carrying too much weight. These include

cellulite, striae distensae (stretch marks), lymphedema etc.

The solution: Of course see a dermatologist to get advice on medication for topical treatments, but also lose weight. Like so many other obesity related problems, this can change the reaction of the skin – one of the body’s biggest organs!

Myth: Saunas and steam baths are good for the skin.

Fact: Saunas have little or no value in ‘cleansing’ the skin. They also have no effect on fat loss, the only loss being weight from water lost in sweat, which is quickly replaced. Saunas provide a psychological feeling of wellbeing which shouldn’t be under-valued. However, they have little or no value in ‘cleansing’ the skin. Even in Finland, where there is said to be one sauna for every four members of the population, the benefit of the practice is now being questioned.



Dr Garry Egger aka Prof Trim

– Click for more information on [Professor Trim](#).

Your Questions Answered

We are often asked about reduced fat foods. Here, dietitian and nutritionist [Catherine Saxelby](#) explains when to opt for ‘light’ and when to be wary of the low fat claims on the packet.



I'm trying to lose a little weight, so should I be buying light foods?

Low fat or 'light' food products are very popular for weight loss and weight management. But not all 'lite' foods are the same. You really need to read the labels. They all have 25–30% less fat. But they're not much help for weight loss UNLESS they also have fewer calories. Here's a quick guide to help you be a savvy shopper:

- Good choice – Low fat or light versions of milk, cream, sour cream, coconut milk, evaporated milk, Cheddar cheese, beer and margarine. For instance, swap full-fat milk for reduced fat milk and you save 6 grams of fat for each glass you drink.
- Be wary – Light versions of chocolate, ice cream, muffins, biscuits and potato crisps have extra sugar and starches (as well as thickeners or gums) to improve the lighter product's texture and mouth feel. For example, when I compared a light cream-filled biscuit with the regular one, I was surprised to discover it only saves you 2 calories despite the fact it's got 35% per cent less fat than the regular one!
- Forget it – Light olive oil, light gravy and lightly-salted crisps are lighter in colour, salt or texture – not calories.

So, what's the bottom line? Apart from the real benefits of reduced fat dairy foods, a small portion of the 'real thing' as an occasional treat is a smarter choice than a big serving of the light alternative.

Loved the piece on chocolate and fund raising last month. Any suggestions for healthy school lunches that won't boomerang?

Here's a great suggestion from one of our Canadian colleagues that may help you come up with lunches that don't come home untouched. 'With three school-age kids to make lunches for, the combinations of who likes what, and who can take what for lunch (although all three of my kids adore strawberries, my son has a classmate who is deathly allergic to them, so I can't take them for lunch) is too much for my brain to keep straight (especially before my morning coffee has kicked in). So I devised a spreadsheet, stuck on the fridge, of all the various lunch options (sandwiches, other eg: baked beans, fruit, veggies, grated cheese, 'treats', etc.). This really streamlines things, where I can look over at the list and get an idea of what to pack! And yes, I have found that when the kids are more involved, there is generally higher acceptance of what is packed. The Waste-free Lunches website has a special section that may be helpful: [Quick Reference Lunch Foods](#).



Your Success Stories

‘I am going for it and will achieve the 82 kg goal.’ – Greg

I am 64 year old RAAF veteran, ex aviation then mine fire fighter and mine rescue officer with a total of 38 years in the profession. I suffer with PTSD, RLS, sleep apnoea, and my blood pressure, weight (102.5 kg / 226 lbs), and glucose levels were rising every visit to the doctor. On the last visit to the sleep clinician he asked how my weight loss was going? ‘Yes’ was my reply meaning not good. He waved his finger at me and asked what my lowest weight was as an adult. 82 kg (180 lbs) was it. Then the stern instruction: ‘In 12 months you WILL be at that weight, you WILL exercise for one hour a day and make up the hour later if you don’t.’ So, since then, after getting a health care plan from my GP with exercising, walk one day, bike ride the next, and eating low GI foods and smaller quantities of other foods as recommended by my dietitian, Julie Gilbert, I lost 5.1 kg (11 lbs) in the first fortnight (2 weeks). Looking forward to what happens this fortnight. WOW. The great thing about the method given to me by my dietitian is that she has laid out the servings sizes and quantities for each group of foods then it is my choice to how I fit them into my energy input scheme for the day. A great thing about it is that so far it has only been a couple of days that I have really craved food. Using a diversion tactic, I overcame the urge. So I am going for it and will achieve the 82 kg goal. By the way, in my spare time I make harps: www.phyrsongharps.com.

– GI Group: Congrats, Greg! But don't go overboard, slowly does it. The normal fall in metabolic rate that accompanies weight loss makes further weight loss harder (Dr Amanda calls it the *Starvation Reaction*). To avoid this pitfall, you might like to have one week in which you choose not to lose weight, just to maintain the weight you have lost.



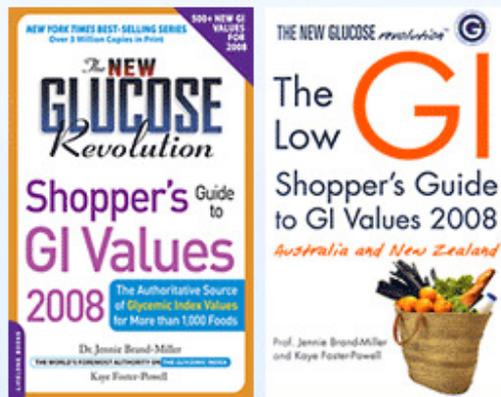
‘The power of one is just amazing.’ – Patricia

‘I have been diet controlled for eight years now – still have my oats, barley flakes and oat, barley and wheat bran, plus whey protein powder, for breakfast, along with a glass of low GI fruit juice but apart from that stick to foods with GI of not more than 50. I have a constant weight of 115 lbs (52 kg), am a blood donor, walk around 20 km (12 miles) per week and successfully competed in Masters’ Games in walking events. I eat kangaroo in preference to beef, low cholesterol and very low fat. Eat lots of veggies even a lower GI spud I have found, plenty of green leafy including Chinese greens, steamed or fresh in salad, couple of pieces of fruit a day. Heart is fine as is BP: 115/60. And I am no spring chicken. I also read labels and lobby to get

sugar removed from things like chopped tomatoes – have had some success there – now after the tomato paste manufacturers! The power of one is just amazing!’

Inspire Others - Share Your GI Story

If healthy eating the GI way has made a difference to your life by helping you achieve blood glucose control or lose weight, please share your success with readers of GI News. It's the real life success stories that give people the motivation they need to get started and help them appreciate that they are not alone. Just click anywhere in this text box to share your story. As a thank you, we will send you a copy of "Shopper's Guide to GI Values 2008" if your story is published in GI News



GI Symbol News with Alan Barclay

‘Why is it that salt content doesn't appear to rate a mention in comments about diet and diabetes? I have found a number of breakfast cereals and breads proudly displaying a low GI symbol but containing as much as 5 times the recommended maximum amount of salt.’ There are many low GI claims on foods and various corporate symbols. Unfortunately, they are currently not regulated in Australia or elsewhere although this may change in the near future. As such, there are no criteria to limit low GI claims to healthier foods and buyers should beware. However, the GI Symbol Program, and its Glycemic Index Tested logo, has been established in Australia to help people identify the healthier lower GI choices. **One of the nutrient criteria that enables a food to carry the official Glycemic Index Tested logo is for sodium.** The cut-offs for each food category have been set to ensure only foods or drinks with reduced amounts of sodium are allowed to be part of the program.



To make a low salt claim in Australia, a food must not contain more than 120 mg of sodium per 100 g. Unfortunately, very few processed foods are able to meet this classification for a variety of reasons, so this claim is pretty rare. It's important to note that this is not a recommended maximum amount as such, but a guide to help people choose low salt foods. The upper recommended level of sodium for Australian adults is 2,300 mg per day. The amount people actually consume depends on both the amount of sodium per 100 g of food and the serve size – both factors are equally important. To choose the healthiest low GI alternatives within a food group, simply look for the Glycemic Index Tested logo.



Alan Barclay

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The Latest GI Values

New GI values for soy beverages from SUGiRS

Calcium fortified soy milks are a valuable source of nutrients for adults and children, but, being liquid, they are very easily over consumed. Think of them as a food or snack in liquid form rather than a thirst-quenching 'drink'. A serving is 1 cup (250 ml). Soy milk can also be used in place of regular milk on your breakfast cereal and in your favourite recipes.

Vitasoy Soy Milky Regular

UHT soy milk GI 21

Serving size 1 cup (250 ml), Available carbs per serving 8 grams, GL 2

Vitasoy Soy Milky Lite (98.5% fat free)

UHT soy milk GI 17

Serving size 1 cup (250 ml), Available carbs per serving 7.5 grams, GL 1



Vitasoy Lush Chocolate & Vitasoy Lush Vanilla (both 98.5% fat free)

UHT flavoured soy milks GI 31

Serving size 1 cup (250 ml), Available carbs per serving 17 grams (Vanilla) and 18.5 grams (Chocolate), GL 5 (Vanilla) and 6 (Chocolate)

Vitasoy Organic

UHT soy milk GI 43

Serving size 1 cup (250 ml), Available carbs per serving 15.5 grams, GL 7



For more information and to check the nutrition information panels: www.vitasoy.com.au

Where can I get more information on GI testing?

North America

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See The New Glucose Revolution on [YouTube](#)