

## GI News—January 2011



- Catherine Saxelby checks out cooking with the new low GI Carisma potatoes
- Should you avoid carbs after 5pm to lose weight? Nicole senior investigates
- Why eating well is not just about weight control – Dr Joanna McMillan Price
- 3 low GI fish recipes to try
- Is honey better than sugar from the perspective of blood glucose?

Until recently most people had few problems deciding what to eat. There wasn't much choice so they simply ate what was available locally – and put in front of them. Today we are bombarded with so many messages about what we should or shouldn't eat, it's no wonder we are confused. In this issue we feature an extract from nutritionist Dr Joanna McMillan Price's award-winning book *Inner Health, Outer Beauty* on how what we eat and drink affects the way we look and feel and ultimately how healthy we are. She makes the point that yes, plenty of other factors are involved like genes and environment, but since we don't have too much control over those, she suggests we exercise it where we can – on our food choices.

Good eating, good health and good reading.

**Editor:** Philippa Sandall

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### Food for Thought

#### **'Just tell me what to eat'**

'The most common request I receive from women, 'writes Dr Joanna, 'is just tell me what to eat. If we want to look and feel our best, we have to consider what we put in our mouths. The right combination of food and drink can give you radiant skin, glossy, healthy hair, strong nails, clear eyes (not to mention good vision) and great teeth and gums.

Despite the intense scientific and public arguments over which diet is best – high protein, low fat, low GI, low carb, low kilojoule or whatever – it seems to me one message resounds above all. We can only do our best when we go back to basics and

eat real food that has been minimally processed. This is the food our bodies have evolved to eat and not the kind manufacturers have devised.

Nonetheless, we lead busy lives. We don't have time most days to spend long hours preparing and cooking food. Certain modern preservation, storing and food distribution techniques are convenient, safe and often necessary, and can help us achieve a healthier diet. Growing your own veggies organically in the backyard is commendable if you can do it, but the fact is most of us can't. What we can do instead is use selected frozen, canned, marinated and dried produce, as well as local seasonal fresh produce, in order to eat as well as possible.

We also now have to bear in mind more recent problems that affect agriculture and contribute to the rising cost of food such as climate change, oil price hikes and other factors. While a diet high in animal food and low in grains may be the one on which we evolved (and therefore may physiologically be best for us), we can no longer eat that way when compelling practical, ethical and environmental considerations are taken into account. The simple truth is we cannot feed the world without grains.'

*Inner Health Outer Beauty* is available from leading bookstores in Australia or you can order a copy at [www.joannamcmillanprice.com/shopping-cart/joanna-s-books](http://www.joannamcmillanprice.com/shopping-cart/joanna-s-books).

## News Briefs

### **The Diogenes children's study**

In December *GI News* we reported the findings of the Diogenes Study, which was set up to investigate whether people who have undergone recent major weight loss could maintain that lower weight. The researchers reported that: 'A modest increase in protein content and a modest reduction in the glycemic index led to an improvement in study completion and maintenance of weight loss.'

To recap, the research team led by Professor Arne Astrup at the University of Copenhagen randomly assigned 773 adults who had previously lost an average of 11kg to one of five diets for a 26-week intervention period. These were not calorie controlled diets – those taking part could eat as much food as they liked from their assigned diet group. Participants were on average 41 years old and were all parents. Their children, although not part of the trial, were assigned to the same diets. All five diets were designed to have a moderate fat content (25–30% of total energy). The diets were:

- Group 1: Low protein (13% energy consumed), low GI
- Group 2: Low protein, high GI
- Group 3: High protein (25% energy consumed), low GI
- Group 4: High protein, high GI
- Group 5: Control diet which followed current dietary guidelines without special instructions regarding GI or protein levels

The results of the children's study have been published in *Pediatrics* ([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20937657](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20937657)). In the families, there were 827 children who only participated in the second part of the program, the diet intervention stage. Thus, they were never required to go on a diet or count calories – they simply followed the same *ab libitum* diet as their parents. Approximately 45% of the children in these families were overweight. The results of the children's study were remarkable: in the group of children who maintained a high-protein (21.4% of calories), lower-GI (56.9) diet the prevalence of overweight dropped spontaneously from approximately 46% to 39% – a decrease of approximately 15%.

### **Paddock2Plate**

Paddock2Plate is a new feature where we share produce stories from food and nutrition blogs that caught our eye and we think may catch yours.

**#1 Australia's home-grown chickpeas** Making the most of chickpeas in your meals is a great way to reduce the overall GI of your diet. But chickpeas are not only good for us, they are good for the land as a rotational crop allowing the soil to rest and regenerate (they add nitrogen). From the 1970s, Australia's annual chickpea crop has grown from virtually nothing to more than half a million tonnes. Award-winning food writer Carli Ratcliff explores this success story on the SBS Hunter-Gatherer blog and gives recipes for spinach-and-chickpea curry, chickpea salad and chickpea patties with mint raita. Check it out at [www.sbs.com.au/food/blogarticle/121337/Australia-s-homegrown-chickpeas/blog/Hunter-Gatherer](http://www.sbs.com.au/food/blogarticle/121337/Australia-s-homegrown-chickpeas/blog/Hunter-Gatherer).

**#2 Cooking with Carisma** Check out the results of a detailed taste test comparing the new general purpose low GI Carisma (GI 55) with the popular high GI Sebago (GI 87) on Catherine Saxelby's Foodwatch website. Dietitian Josephine Mollica did the cooking and rates Carisma better than Sebago for boiling, mashing and dry baking but when it came to roasting, she found that although the Carisma was the more flavoursome, it didn't crisp as well on the outside. Of course, when it comes to

glycemic impact, the Carisma wins hands down. Read the review at <http://foodwatch.com.au/459-product-review-carisma-cutting-the-gi-of-potatoes.html> – and keep those potato portions moderate!

**#3 Bee Story** Much of the food we put on our tables depends on pollination by honey and bumble bees which makes their decline a major concern. In the UK, bee colonies have doubled in six months due to amateur beekeepers harvesting honey. Martin Smith, president of the British Beekeepers' Association, discusses whether it is the beginning of the end of the bee crisis at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid\\_9135000/9135898.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_9135000/9135898.stm).

'It's very easy for all of us to do our bit for honeybees, bumblebees and other pollinating insects by growing the sort of plants and flowers they love – either in our gardens or in pots on windowsills or balconies. To have bees visit your garden is a cause for real celebration.' – Kate Humble, Springwatch.

### **Professor Jennie Brand-Miller talks about her latest edition of the *Low GI Diet Handbook* ... and how it all began and truly became a Glucose Revolution**

'In 1995, I joined forces with Dr Stephen Colagiuri and Kaye Foster-Powell to write *The GI Factor*, the first book for the general public about the glycemic index of foods. Research on the glycemic index, or what became known as the GI, clearly showed that different carbohydrate foods had dramatically different effects on blood glucose levels. We believed that it was high time someone brought this story out to the general public. We knew from our own work that understanding the GI of foods made an enormous difference to the diet and lifestyle of people with diabetes. For some it meant, in our experience, a new lease of life.

In the early 1980s I was studying the nutritional composition of Aboriginal bush foods such as acacia seeds and cheeky yam. These foods are unique today because they are uncultivated foods, unlike wheat or potato. Food samples were sent from all over Australia to my laboratory at the University of Sydney for analysis and I took the opportunity to check the metabolic responses they created, that is, how they actually affected blood sugar levels in the body. The results were telling. Aboriginal bush foods produced only half the blood sugar responses of starchy Western staples like bread and potatoes. So, the question had to be asked: had these traditional foods somehow protected Aborigines from developing diabetes in times past? The answer

was yes.

The GI of more than 2000 foods has now been tested worldwide, both singly and in combination with mixed meals. Long-term studies on its potential to improve diabetes control have also been carried out. We now know that consuming low GI foods is associated with a lower risk of both type 2 diabetes and coronary heart disease.

Our studies with animal models show that the GI of foods influences the rate at which animals gain body fat and develop abnormalities in insulin secretion. We have also tested the applications of GI for sporting performance and appetite control. It is now obvious, not only to us but to many expert committees and health authorities around the world, that the GI of foods has enormous implications for everybody. It is indeed a 'Glucose Revolution' in that it has changed forever the way we think about carbohydrates.

When our book was first published in 1996, we received a great deal of feedback from readers and health professionals. And still, hardly a day goes by without an email or letter from someone wanting to say thank you and to find out more. Now retitled the *Low GI Diet Handbook* (Hachette Australia), it brings together all the information that we have put together over the years to give you the most up-to-date and key dietary messages in one package. It will show you how the GI carbohydrate story fits in with all the other messages about fat, protein, exercise and the many ways you can approach having a healthy diet that suits you and your family's lifestyle, no matter how busy you are. Most importantly the *Low GI Diet Handbook* focuses on individual needs, likes and dislikes and can be adapted to your particular eating habits and food preferences. Our Low GI Diet Handbook is not about one way of eating a healthy diet – it is about giving you the information to make eating a healthy diet much, much easier.

There's not just one way of eating a healthy diet. What we now know about these different nutritional factors gives us a great deal of flexibility, which is extremely important and helpful in choosing food and food combinations that suit the likes and dislikes of you and your family.'

- Also available: ***Low GI Diet 12-week Weight-Loss Plan*** (Hachette Australia).

- Both titles can be purchased from good bookshops or online booksellers in Australia and New Zealand – e.book editions available soon.

## Get the Scoop on Nutrition with Emma Stirling

### **The scoop on a healthy kitchen # 1**

If you've made resolutions around healthy eating and home cooking for 2011, give yourself a big pat on the back. But before you can take charge of new health goals, you really need to get your house in order. Well, more importantly, your kitchen and its setup for good nutrition. Let's kick off 2011 with the scoop on a healthy kitchen and a look at our top equipment picks.

**In a spin:** A multicoloured, vibrant salad is one of the best ways to boost your health and help meet your vegetable serves each day. But nothing spoils a salad more than unwashed, gritty rocket or spinach or soggy leaves that are not spun dry. So invest in a salad spinner and aim for at least five different veggies in your salads. You can also toss in some low GI chickpeas or three bean mix for a fibre boost.

**Back to basics:** It's not a long list, but good knives, heat resistant silicon spatulas, wooden spoons, separate cutting boards for meat and produce, a colander, a heavy based saucepan or Dutch oven and non-stick fry pan are on my list of essentials.

**The added touch:** A long hand held fine grater, called a microplane, allows you to artfully but quickly add a little parmesan to the top of pasta, lime zest or fresh ginger to fruit salad or fresh, whole cinnamon or nutmeg to Bircher muesli. Remember it's that little touch of spice or garnish, that turns healthy fare nice and boosts the flavour without added fat, salt or sugar. And don't discount the old box grater. Hand grating, instead of using a food processor, is a great way to burn off kilojoules and give your arms a workout as you cook.

**Measure up:** It's so easy to measure and weigh ingredients and check portion sizes when you have stainless steel measuring spoons, a set of cups, glass jugs for liquids and digital scales.

**Under pressure:** Pressure cookers also help cut down cooking time, trap in flavours and retain nutrients. They are perfect for speeding up cooking time of those healthy low GI chickpeas and other legumes.

**Take it slowly:** Electric slow cookers allow you to prep a curry or bolognese sauce and leave it on low, slow heat all day (while you're away) without the risk of burning or bubbling over. Slow cooking is also one of the best ways to tenderise cheaper cuts of meat.

**With a twist:** you can use a coffee grinder for spices, a cast iron grill pan for pressing toasted sandwiches, a fruit dehydrator for drying fresh herbs, and a wok for dry roasting nuts and seeds.

**On hand:** You don't need to spend the price of a small car on the top of the range food processor, especially if you're just getting going. Many people find an inexpensive hand held blender just the ticket to healthy fare. You can keep it ready on your bench top to immerse directly into soups, whip up a smoothie or use the mini chopper for a quick and healthy dip, salsa or marinade.

**Emma Stirling** is an Accredited Practising Dietitian and health writer with over ten years experience writing for major publications. She is editor of The Scoop on Nutrition ([www.scoopnutrition.com](http://www.scoopnutrition.com)) – a blog by expert dietitians. Check it out for hot news bites.

## In the GI News Kitchen

American dietitian and author of *Good Carbs, Bad Carbs*, **Johanna Burani**, shares favourite recipes with a low or moderate GI from her Italian kitchen. For more information, check out [www.eatgoodcarbs.com](http://www.eatgoodcarbs.com). The photographs are by Sergio Burani. His food, travel and wine photography website is [photosbysergio.com](http://photosbysergio.com).

### **Crumbed cod with vinaigrette topping**

My grandfather owned a fish store and so fish was often on the menu when we ate at Grandma's. If she was cooking just for us kids she wouldn't fuss too much, but who knew? We all loved this recipe and always cleaned our plates! Grandma served this with veggies like steamed cauliflower florets or sautéed zucchini as we had already had pasta in some form beforehand. If you don't have pasta first, I suggest serving it with veggies or a salad and perhaps baked orange-fleshed sweet potato wedges. If cod is not available, use another firm, white-fleshed fish such as scrod or halibut. Ask your fishmonger for suggestions. Serves 2

2 x 150g (5oz) fresh cod fillets, rinsed and patted dry  
2 tbsp egg substitute (or 1 small egg, whisked)  
¼ cup seasoned breadcrumbs (made from a low GI bread of course)  
vegetable spray  
1 tbsp sherry vinegar  
1 tsp olive oil  
1 clove garlic, finely minced  
freshly ground sea salt to taste  
freshly ground black pepper to taste  
4 large sprigs flat parsley, finely chopped

**Preheat** the broiler/grill. Coat the bottom of a shallow baking dish with vegetable oil spray.

**Place** the egg substitute and the breadcrumbs in separate bowls. Dip the fish into the egg first and then the breadcrumbs, coating both sides well. Lay the fillets flat in the baking dish, bottom side up and cook about 15cm (6in) from the heat for 2½–3 minutes. Turn and cook a further 2½ minutes or until flesh flakes and they are done.

**Meanwhile**, prepare the vinaigrette by whisking together the vinegar, olive oil, garlic, salt and pepper.

**Sprinkle** the parsley over the fish, drizzle with vinaigrette and serve immediately with vegetables or salad.

*Per serving (fish and vinaigrette only)*

Energy: 600kJ/143 cal; Protein 20g; Fat 4g (includes less than 1g saturated fat and 40mg cholesterol); Available carbs 8g; Fibre 1g

Cut back on the food bills and enjoy fresh-tasting, easily prepared, seasonal, satisfying and delicious low or moderate GI meals that don't compromise on quality and flavour one little bit with **Money Saving Meals author Diane Temple**. For more recipes check out the Money Saving Meals website at [www.moneysavingmeals.com.au](http://www.moneysavingmeals.com.au).

### **Asian fish & cucumber salad**

This Vietnamese-style salad from our book, *Money Saving Meals*, is made with basa fillets – a freshwater Vietnamese catfish with a mild flesh (and not too many bones) that remains moist during cooking. It was also very cheap. If you want to use a local fish, tell the fishmonger what you are making and ask for some economical suggestions. Serves 4.

½ teaspoon turmeric  
1 tablespoon fish sauce  
1½ tablespoons peanut oil  
400g (14oz) fish fillets (such as basa), cut into chunks  
125g (4oz) vermicelli noodles  
3 cups shredded iceberg lettuce or 100 g mixed lettuce leaves  
2 Lebanese cucumbers, halved lengthwise, sliced thinly  
1 carrot, coarsely grated  
2 tablespoons chopped dill  
4 green onions, sliced  
1/3 cup roasted peanuts, chopped

#### *Dressing*

1 tablespoon fish sauce  
1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed  
1 tablespoon caster sugar  
1/3 cup lemon juice  
2 tablespoons peanut oil

**Whisk** the turmeric, fish sauce and 2 teaspoons of the oil together in a medium-sized bowl. Add the fish and set aside to marinate for 15 minutes.

**Prepare** the vermicelli noodles. Pop them into a heatproof bowl, cover with boiling water and leave them to soften. Drain, run them under cold water, drain again, then snip in half (or small pieces) with kitchen scissors.

**Make** the dressing by whisking all the ingredients together in a small bowl until the sugar has dissolved. Put the lettuce, cucumber slices and carrot into a large serving bowl with the noodles and drizzle over the dressing.

**Heat** the oil in a large frying pan over medium–high heat and stir-fry the fish for about 3–4 minutes, stirring often, until just cooked. Add the dill and green onion, stir to combine. Fold the fish mixture gently through the salad so that the fish is coated with the dressing and top with the roasted peanuts for added crunch.

#### *Per serving*

Energy:2000kJ/340 cal; Protein 29g; Fat 25g (includes 4g saturated fat and 59mg cholesterol); Available carbs 32g; Fibre 5g

## **Diabetic Living**

This month's *Diabetic Living* magazine (for ANZ) comes with a free booklet (***Your Low GI Healthy Eating Guide***) stuck to the cover that was generously sponsored by Abbott Diabetes Care. As we were putting together this issue of *GI News*, we spoke to *Diabetic Living* editor Erica Goatly about the booklet: 'We're already getting very positive reader feedback about how it is motivating them to get their eating back on track and it has only been on the newsstands a few days,' she said. The following low GI recipe is reproduced with permission from January/February *Diabetic Living* magazine (photography by Louise Lister). If you haven't used puy or French-style lentils before, you can buy them in supermarkets, health shops and delis. McKenzies brand French-style lentils are widely available in supermarkets in Australia and not pricy at all (your *GI News* editor buys them in her local IGA at Bondi Beach.)

### **Ocean trout with lentils**

1 tsp olive oil

1 red onion cut into thin slivers

1 garlic clove, crushed

½ cup (100g) Puy or French-style lentils, rinsed and drained

¾ cup water (180ml)

½ cup (125ml) salt reduced chicken stock

Freshly ground black pepper

200g (7oz) skinless, boneless ocean trout fillet cut into 2 portions

1 bunch asparagus, woody ends trimmed

Olive oil cooking spray

2 tsp freshly squeezed lemon juice

½ tsp grated lemon zest

Flat leaf parsley leaves, to serve

160g sugar snap peas or mangetout, steamed, to serve

**Heat** oil in a medium saucepan on medium. Add garlic and onion. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 6–7 minutes until onion softens slightly. Add lentils, water and stock. Cover and bring to a simmer. Reduce heat to medium-low. Cook, covered, for 20–25 minutes or until lentils are just tender. Remove pan from heat. Set aside, covered, for 5 minutes. Season with pepper.

**Meanwhile**, preheat the barbecue grill or chargrill pan to medium-high. Spray each side of the fillets and asparagus with cooking spray. Add asparagus to barbecue grill or chargrill pan. Cook, turning occasionally, for 3–4 minutes or until just tender. Transfer to a plate. Add trout to barbecue grill or chargrill pan. Cook on each side for

2½ minutes for medium, or until cooked to your liking.

**Divide** lentil mixture between plates. Top with trout. Sprinkle the lemon juice, lemon zest and parsley over. Accompany with asparagus and sugar snap peas.

*Per serving*

Energy: 1513kJ/360 cal; Protein 38g; Fat 9g (includes 1.6g saturated fat and 55mg cholesterol); Available carbs 28g; Fibre 11g

## Busting Food Myths with Nicole Senior

**Myth: You have to avoid carbs after 5pm to lose weight.**

**Fact: The time of day you eat carbs makes no difference to your weight – it's the total amount you eat over the day that counts.**

Avoiding carbs after five is popular advice, often given by people in the fitness industry to assist their clients lose weight. There's even a diet book of the same name. While proponents may mean well, such advice simply adds to the mythology around weight loss. Following this advice might even work in the short term, but this only compounds the misunderstanding about why.

Similar to the previous myth 'eating at night makes you fat'

(<http://ginews.blogspot.com/2007/11/busting-food-myths-with-nicole-senior.html>), the timing of carb intake is physiologically irrelevant; it's the amount and type you eat that matters. There's not a single study on the National Library of Medicine ([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed)) database about carbohydrate timing and weight loss (however, there's plenty on carb timing and athletic performance if you're interested).

Like other diets that restrict a particular nutrient or food group, the advice to avoid carbs after 5pm is simply a kilojoule/calorie reduction strategy dressed up as something catchier. When you think of a typical evening meal of chicken, noodles and vegetables, it's not hard to see how skipping noodles creates a kilojoule deficit. If you can do it, great – it is possible to eat enough grain foods (preferably wholegrain and low GI) at other times during the day.

However a common experience of evening carb avoiders is they are still hungry after dinner and that's when TV snacking can wreak havoc. Biscuits, chocolate and sweets are common evening saboteurs and they all contain carbohydrates. (And a side note, many people don't understand that sugar is a carbohydrate too, which results in

starchy foods getting a bad rap and sugar sailing through unsullied). Unfortunately the biscuits and chocolate also contain hefty amounts of saturated fat and kilojoules as well. This carb-craving may be physiological or psychological but it doesn't really matter – the kilojoule damage is done.

The 'no carbs after 5pm' rule – and its variants 4pm and 6pm – is part of a dieting mentality we know is inherently unsustainable, although to be fair it is a much more moderate 'low-carb' diet. By deliberately depriving ourselves of commonly eaten, enjoyable foods we repeatedly build up psychological pressure that eventually results in overeating blow-outs: the classic dieting merry-go-round.

A far more balanced approach to lose weight is to eat smaller portions of carb-rich core foods like bread, pasta, rice, noodles and the like, and choose lower GI versions combined with plenty of vegetables and satisfying amounts of lean meat, chicken, fish or vegetarian alternatives. In nutrition circles, this is what we call a 'balanced meal'. Unfortunately for many, the 'moderation' message is boring and unappealing.

This situation is not helped by the diet industries who also know the moderation message doesn't sell and come up with all manner of trumped-up benefits and half-baked theories as to why their diet will actually work when all they are doing is selling creative ways to eat fewer kilojoules.

To lose weight we must reconcile the facts we must eat less and exercise more, and all the while ensure we eat quality foods to meet our nutritional needs. Blacklisting particular nutrients like carbs or fats is not helpful to this end. Prioritising nutrient rich foods from all the food groups in suitable amounts according to our energy needs is the answer.

**Nicole Senior** MSc (Nut&Diet) BSc (Nut) is an Accredited Practising Dietitian and Nutritionist. You can find good advice and great recipes using nutrient rich foods in Nicole's books *Eat to Beat Cholesterol* and *Heart Food* available at [www.eattobeatcholesterol.com.au](http://www.eattobeatcholesterol.com.au).

## GI Symbol News with Dr Alan Barclay

### **A healthy low GI diet is achievable**

There's pretty compelling evidence from population health studies

([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18326601](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18326601)) and clinical trials

([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12882846](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12882846)) around the world that as part of an

overall healthy, balanced diet, we should aim for an average dietary GI of around 45 for longterm health and wellbeing. It's not as hard as it sounds when you take the 'this for that' option, that is you simply substitute healthy low GI carbs for high GI ones when shopping, cooking and eating out:



While this is in principle relatively simple, finding those healthy low GI alternatives has not always been that easy. This is why one of the primary objectives of the Glycemic Index Foundation has been to work with food industry in Australia and around the world to develop healthy low GI alternatives for popular everyday foods thus making healthy low GI choices, easy choices for everybody.

Our first step was to identify the top five sources of glycemic carbohydrate in the Australian diet (and the pattern is very similar in [North America](#) ([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12361493](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12361493))). They are: Breads, Breakfast cereals, Potatoes, Sugars and sugar-based products and Rice and pasta. Giving people healthy low GI alternatives for these foods will make it relatively easy for anyone to achieve an average dietary GI of 45 (this is a good 10 points below the 'low' GI diets achieved in the European Diogenes study ([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21105792](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21105792)) and the UK's RISCK study

([www.ajcn.org/cgi/content/full/92/4/748](http://www.ajcn.org/cgi/content/full/92/4/748))).

**Breads:** Healthy low GI breads are now relatively common in Australia, with popular brands like Burgen found on most supermarket shelves. New additions include popular tortillas like Mission Foods White Corn Tortillas (GI = 52) which can be used as wraps or in Mexican cooking.

**Breakfast cereals:** This category is harder. Currently when people ask us about low GI breakfast cereals we tend to suggest traditional porridge oats or natural mueslis such as Morning Sun mueslis (GI=49). The reason healthy low GI ready-to-eat breakfast cereals are harder to find on the supermarket shelves is partly because modern processing techniques (rolling and flaking) make their starch rapidly digested and absorbed. Don't be disheartened, the challenge is not insurmountable. We are currently talking to a major breakfast cereal company (as we did with the potato growers) with the aim of working with them to help them lower the GI of all of their popular ready-to-eat cereals.

**Potatoes:** The Carisma potato is the first success story of an ongoing collaboration between the GI Foundation, University of Sydney and the Australian potato industry. Large scale production of this low GI (55) general purpose potato is the first step to providing shoppers with a full range of low GI potatoes that they can use for specific purposes such as potato salads, mashing, roasting, baking, etc.

**Sugar:** Logicane, the first low GI (50) cane sugar was launched in Australia in 2009, and is helping to lower the GI of popular sugary foods that are popular contributors to our daily glycemic load.

**Rice & pasta:** There are an increasing number of low GI rices being produced and tested including Moolgiri (GI54) and Saffola Arise (GI54). And despite popular perception, regular pasta made from hard durum wheat has a low GI. For example, the GI of Vetta's range is 49. Like potato, keep those portions moderate to reap the glycemic rewards of these popular, inexpensive starchy staples.

**What next?** The GI Foundation looks forward to working collaboratively with food industry in 2011, to continue to make healthy low GI choices easy choices. And by the 'food industry' we mean food manufacturers around the world. If you are a GI News reader in the UK or US, you may say: "we don't have the healthy low GI choices you do." We have to say we have knocked on doors around the world to encourage food

manufacturers to a) have their products GI tested and b) join the Symbol program to make it easier for shoppers to identify those low GI foods. To date we haven't had much success internationally – they say there's not enough demand. We need you to show them they are wrong. What should you do? Create DEMAND. Contact the customer service department of the manufacturers of your favourite breads and breakfast cereals for starters and ask them about the GI of their products.



### **For more information about the GI Symbol Program**

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## **GI Update**

### **Professor Jennie Brand-Miller answers your questions**

#### **From the perspective of blood glucose, is honey better than sugar?**

Up until recently, we would have said honey is not different from table sugar. After all, honey doesn't contribute much in the way of micronutrients, and we thought it had a similar effect on blood glucose as table sugar.

In fact, while most commercial varieties have the same or greater effect than table sugar, recent evidence suggests that some forms of honey have only a minor effect on blood glucose. These are the pure floral honeys – (in Australia) red gum, yellow box, ironbark and others – that have been produced by allowing bees access only to some

types of gum trees (eucalypts). It's possible that all pure floral honeys have only modest glyceic effects, but it is too early to say as there hasn't been sufficient testing around the world. Romanian locust honey appears to have the lowest effect of all the honeys.

**Why would one honey be different from another?** Well, most commercial honeys are made from a mixture of honeys derived from different hives and different floral sources. To maintain a consistent flavour, some of the more pungent characteristics are removed. We suspect that the components that are removed are physiologically active and work to slow down absorption. For example, Australian floral honeys might contain alpha-glucosidase inhibitors that bees have extracted from the eucalypt flowers. We know that these potent inhibitors exist in many plants and, indeed, some diabetic medications (e.g. Acarbose) are based on pure forms of these inhibitors.

In addition, a recent study in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* ([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19756024](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19756024)) reports that five German honeys have a low GI. The researchers found that the 'glycaemic index and insulinaemic index correlated significantly with the fructose content of honey varieties'.