

## **The benefits of low G I (Glycaemic Index) foods and snacks**

### **The benefits of a healthy eating lifestyle**

It is important for everyone to follow a healthy eating lifestyle and this can be especially helpful in preventing or controlling long-term conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease and some cancers. Healthy eating helps regulate blood glucose and cholesterol levels, blood pressure and aids weight control.

### **Glycaemic Index**

Evidence shows that an emphasis on foods which have a lower G I rating e.g. whole-grain bread, pasta, chapattis, long-grain rice, most vegetables and dairy products, and many fruits, can be helpful in achieving a healthy eating lifestyle. The Glycaemic Index is a system which rates foods according to their overall effect on blood glucose levels, with low GI foods being absorbed more slowly into the blood-stream and making you feel full for longer.

### **Benefits of including low G I foods in meals and as snacks**

1. Helps maintain steady blood glucose levels, which is particularly important for those with diabetes but is also beneficial in helping to avoid sugar cravings.
2. Helps maintain a healthy body weight by making you feel full for longer.
3. Helps balance cholesterol levels, promoting “good” cholesterol in the body and reducing levels of harmful cholesterol.
4. Reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Snack foods on offer here today include oat-based products, nuts, seeds and dried fruit. These have been chosen because of their slow energy release, which can help to control appetite and their vitamin / mineral content which helps promote good health.

### **Nuts and seeds**

These are an excellent source of protein, fibre, vitamins, minerals and healthy (unsaturated) oils e.g. the essential fatty - acids omega-3 and omega-6. Despite their relatively high energy content, eating nuts and seeds has been shown to reduce consumption of other (less nutritious) energy-dense foods. Among the most nutritious nuts and seeds are almonds, cashews, walnuts, sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds. Eating a variety will help ensure you get a good balance of minerals and vitamins, including antioxidants, which help prevent disease by combating damage done to cells.

### **The benefits of eating oat-based products**

Oats have a slower energy release than most other grains (e.g. wheat), so will make you feel full for longer. This is important for maintaining steady blood sugar levels and thus, controlling appetite. When eaten regularly, oats have also been shown to improve cardiovascular health by helping to reduce levels of harmful cholesterol.

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