Make it a FruitFULL Spring!

by B. Kay Sugg

Spring is here and with summer close behind, many fruits are in-season or will be soon. As we shift to lighter clothes, we also often eat lighter meals. Now is a great time to take advantage of having the freshest, most nourishing fruits available by incorporating them into recipes or simply enjoying them raw.

If you are one of those people who avoid eating many fruits because of the sugar content, you may be thinking that calories are calories no matter the source. But it is important to recognize that many foods that have the same calorie count can be very different in terms of nutritional quality and the effect they have on your health.

One way to look at this difference is by looking at the glycemic index compared to the glycemic load of a food. The glycemic index ranks carbohydrates in food on a scale from 0 to 100 based on how quickly they are converted into blood sugar. Foods with a high glycemic index (GI) number cause a rapid rise or spike in blood sugar. According to the American Diabetes Association, foods with a high glycemic index increase blood sugar higher and faster than foods with a low glycemic index. There are three GI categories: low GI foods (55 or less), medium GI foods (56-69) and high GI foods (70 or more).

The glycemic load (GL) is a separate measure that indicates not only how quickly a food is converted into sugar in the blood stream but also how much carbohydrate a serving of food contains. For example, watermelon has a high glycemic index (80). But a serving of watermelon has so little carbohydrate that its glycemic load is only 5. Many people, especially diabetics, need to choose foods that have a low glycemic load (a load of 10 or less is considered low). You might be pleasantly surprised to discover that a number of fresh, raw fruits have both low calories and a low glycemic load. A few examples of fruits that are low in calories and also have a low glycemic load (for a one-cup serving) are:

Strawberries (halves) – 50 calories, Glycemic load – 3
Watermelon (diced) – 46 calories, Glycemic load – 5
Apple (raw slices) – 57 calories, Glycemic load – 3
Papaya – 55 calories, Glycemic load - 3

Cherries (with pits) – 87 calories, Glycemic load –3.7
Cantaloupe – 55 calories, Glycemic load – 4
Blueberries – 84 calories, Glycemic load – 6

Bear in mind that the glycemic index of fruits (and other foods) is an indicator which can change based on several factors. As fruits ripen, their glycemic index goes up. Preparation of foods also impacts their glycemic index. For example, fat, fiber and acid (such as vinegar and lemon juice) lower the glycemic index. For starches (like pasta), the longer you cook them, the higher the index will be. You can also impact the glycemic index of what you're eating by balancing other foods that you eat at the same time. (For example, combine high-glycemic index foods with lower ones, to bring down the overall glycemic index of a meal.)

Of course, using the glycemic index to choose foods is just one aspect of healthy eating. Healthy eating also means choosing a variety of foods, having moderate portion sizes, and selecting more whole foods instead of processed foods. To learn more about the glycemic index and glycemic load, visit the Glycemic Index Foundation (gisymbol. com). For a broader listing of the index for popular foods and drinks, visit glycemicindex.com, an extensive database of foods that includes both glycemic index and glycemic load provided by the University of Sydney.

the **right choice...**
for a **healthier you**

References:
American Diabetes Association, www.diabetes.org
Glycemic Index Foundation, www.gisymbol.com
Harvard Medical School, www.health.harvard.edu

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JUMP INTO SPRING WITH SOME
FRUITY REFRESHMENT!

HONEY LIME DRESSING

Perfect served over fresh fruit!

INGREDIENTS:

- 6 tablespoons salad oil
- 3 tablespoons lime juice
- 3 tablespoons honey
- 1/4 teaspoon vinegar
- 1 pinch ground ginger

Source: https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/233890/fresh-fruit-salad-with-honey-lime-dressing

WATERMELON AND CUCUMBER REFRESHER

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/2 (4 pound) watermelon, seeded and cubed
- 4 cucumbers, trimmed and cut into chunks
- 2 limes, juiced

Run the watermelon and cucumber pieces through a juicer or blender, and place juice into a pitcher. Stir in lime juice, and serve.

Source: https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/215519/watermelon-and-cucumber-juice-with-a-spritz-of-lime

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