WV Wellness

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Sugars: are they all the same?

Sugar, an essential source of fuel for the human body, is consumed and assimilated in many different forms. From a nutritional point of view, sugar belongs to the **carbohydrate** family, which can be divided into:

- **polysaccharides** or complex sugars such as bread, pasta, potatoes and rice;
- **disaccharides** such as sucrose (common table sugar) and maltose;
- **monosaccharides** such as glucose and fructose.

Between them, the three categories are diverse from both a chemical and nutritional point of view. Our diet must include all three, but often tends to be richest in those which are least beneficial to our health. So how do you distinguish foods containing 'good' sugar, which are suitable to eat, from 'bad' sugar, which should be avoided? This is where the Glycemic Index (GI) comes in.

The system ranks foods rich in carbohydrates based on their effect on the glycemia, in other words their ability to raise or lower blood sugar levels following consumption. For example, a low glycemic index of around 50 represents carbohydrates which are absorbed slowly, releasing glucose gradually into the blood stream, whilst a high glycemic index of around 100 or higher indicates rapid absorption, and therefore high glycemic 'spikes'.

Article provided by TECHNOGYM The Wellness Company

Willamette View

Getting rid of leg cramps in the middle of the night:

- While in bed straightening the leg and flex the foot toward the shin – hold the stretch until the cramp releases. POINTING THE TOES AWAY FROM THE SHIN WILL CAUSE THE INTENSITY OF THE CRAMP TO INCREASE.

or

- Get out of bed and stand or walk on the affected leg

- Drinking plenty of water during the day may help prevent leg cramps from occurring during the day.

A sudden spike in glycemia stimulates the release of a hormone called **insulin**, which reduces blood glucose levels by forcing it to be stored in cells. Blood glucose levels may subsequently fall too low, thereby transmitting a message requesting more sugars and stimulating the desire to eat.

A carbohydrate-rich diet with a high glycemic index may therefore give rise to a **damaging physiological mechanism** which often leads to dietary disorders related to **overweight** and **obesity**.

It follows that **high GI foods** should be consumed in **limited quantities**. This group particularly includes sugary **drinks** (soft drinks such as cola, orange squash and citrus drinks), **sweets**, **biscuits**, **potatoes**, **white bread** and **rice**.

Meanwhile there are other foods which also provide carbohydrates, but which are not rapidly assimilated, therefore they do not cause an abnormal rise in glycemia or insulin levels in the blood stream.
This category of foods includes the majority of **vegetables** (with the exception of potatoes, pumpkin, beetroot and carrots) and fruit (except bananas, persimmons, certain types of exotic fruit and certain types of dry fruit, such as raisins and figs).
It is therefore advisable to consume foods with a low glycemic index which help maintain the most stable blood sugar level, thereby guaranteeing better control over hunger.

Study conducted by the Technogym Studies and Research Centre