

Chapter 1

Introducing GL: Healthy Eating in the Real World

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In This Chapter

- ▶ Discovering a healthy eating plan that makes scientific sense
 - ▶ Understanding the key principles of easy GL eating
 - ▶ Putting the pieces into practice
 - ▶ Embracing the GL lifestyle for good health – for keeps
 - ▶ Hearing from the professionals
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The diet industry is worth millions because people are continually searching for that elusive perfect diet. Diet fads come and go; some diets are effective and some are downright dangerous. Industrialised countries face an obesity epidemic with huge implications in terms of individual suffering and medical costs. Therefore, people turn in hope to the latest eating trends fuelling the quest for the perfect diet – diets that seem to become more and more extreme.

Working with patients, training the dietitians of the future, and sifting through the mountain of scientific evidence surrounding different dietary theories means that we can see the problem of finding an effective diet from many different angles.

We work with people who need help improving their diet and lifestyle, and we have access to the evolving science along with the skills to translate new findings into real-life strategies and real foods. As registered dietitians, we're at the frontline in the battle to find a diet that's satisfying, good for you, and promotes a healthy weight. We have great news for you – we've found it!

In this chapter we introduce you to the *Glycaemic Load Diet* (GL Diet), the most significant breakthrough in nutritional science by far. The GL Diet is balanced and provides all the nutrition you need to be healthy. We share with you why the easy-to-follow low-GL way of eating can give you more energy, reduce your risk of disease, stamp out your food cravings, and enable you to maintain a healthy weight.



Weight-loss diets often forget about the complete nutritional package you need to achieve not only a healthy weight but a healthy body, too. The GL Diet is sustainable for life – that means it's both safe and nutritionally complete.

Easy to Choose, Easy to Use

The GL Diet is based on eating certain carbohydrates, as part of a healthy diet, that slowly release energy keeping you going for longer, rather than storing the fuel away as fat. (Head to Chapter 2 for more of the science behind the eating plan.)

One of the best things about the GL-way of eating is the flexibility that you have with food. Whether or not you're trying to lose weight, you won't feel at all as if you're on a restrictive diet. Think of the GL Diet as an eating plan, rather than a diet – much nicer!

The two most important factors for healthy eating are:

- ✓ **Enjoy your food:** Eating is a pleasant aspect of your life. The GL Diet doesn't ban any foods nor make other foods obligatory. Enjoying your food the GL-way means getting a better balance of foods in your diet in order to be healthy and to minimise the risk of disease.
- ✓ **Eat a variety of foods:** The greater the variety of foods you eat, the more essential nutrients your diet will contain, especially the necessary vitamins and minerals.

These two concepts are the very pinnacle on which to base a healthy, happy, balanced diet. The idea of avoiding any food forever fills us both with horror. As well as being registered dietitians, we're also both real foodies. We love to cook and we love to eat – and that's why we love GL.

Putting GL into Practice

We want to make sure that you have everything you need to start the GL Diet today – hassle-free. We spent hours searching the supermarket aisles for GL-friendly foods; we picked our way through loads of restaurant menus to help you eat out in GL-style (the hard life of a *For Dummies* author); and we hit the kitchen to develop a range of recipes so that you can eat low GL all the way.

Low-GL food guides

You'll find lots of information about choosing food for your low-GL eating plan in Chapters 11, 12, and 16. Here are some at-a-glance guidelines:

- ✓ **Meat, fish, and poultry:** Choose a good mixture of protein foods including lean meats, skinless poultry, and a mix of white and oily fish.
- ✓ **Fruit and vegetables:** Pretty much all fruit and veg are great on a low-GL diet (take a look at the Cheat Sheet). Aim to eat a rainbow of different colours to get the best mix of vitamins and minerals.
- ✓ **Fats:** Replace saturated fat (such as butter and lard) with polyunsaturated (such as corn oil) and monounsaturated fats (such as olive oil).
- ✓ **Nuts and seeds:** All nuts and seeds are good for you and for your low-GL plan in moderate quantities.
- ✓ **Grains:** Go for the wholegrains such as oats, pearl barley, rye, and bulgur wheat.
- ✓ **Pasta, rice, and potatoes:** Choose small amounts of pasta and don't overcook it. Mix rice with lentils or beans to lower the GL, and choose small new potatoes or sweet potatoes over large white potatoes.
- ✓ **Breads:** Pick the grainiest bread possible, because bread with seeds and nuts is lower GL than white or wholemeal bread.

Shopping low-GL style

Some diets force you to buy and eat a whole new range of foods you'd never normally touch. In fact, many people gave up on their diets because they simply don't like the food they have to eat.

The good news is that the GL Diet doesn't come with a lot of rigid rules or foods that are banned.

Successful shopping low-GL style relies on some very simple principles:

- ✓ Be prepared – always shop with a list based on the foods you need for the next few days
- ✓ Never shop when you're hungry
- ✓ Don't be tempted by special offers on food that you don't need. If you don't need it, don't buy it!

Read Chapter 4 for more about getting in and out of the supermarket in one healthy, happy piece.



The Cheat Sheet at the front of this book gives you a handy guide to the best low-GL options for starchy staples and seasonal fruits and veggies. Be sure to check it out, or better yet, tear it out and keep it with you.

Eating out, eating well

Eating out is the perfect way to catch up with friends – and all the gossip! The last thing you want when you hope to have a good time is to deprive yourself by nibbling on a lettuce leaf – simply because you're not sure of your low-GL options.

Take these golden nuggets to heart to help you stay on track no matter where you're dining:

- ✓ When you take your seat, ask for some water. A drink of water wards off the hunger pangs.
- ✓ Avoid grazing on the bread basket, which is probably full of high-GL breads.

- ✓ Don't starve all day as an allowance for a blow-out at dinnertime.
- ✓ Ask for exactly what you want; you're the customer after all. Sauce on the side instead of poured over your dinner? Fruit or cheese for dessert? Just a small portion of pasta? You call the shots!

When preparing to write this book, we ate out in Chinese, Indian, Mexican, and fast-food restaurants so that we could give you the latest low-GL menu choices available. Chapter 5 is your whistle-stop tour of what's GL-hot and what's not in your favourite restaurants. All that research was tough, but hey, someone had to do it.

Recipes for success

Knowing the foods that are low-GL is useful, but you also need to have recipes for preparing low-GL foods. Check out Part III, where you find heaps of low-GL recipes that will make your mouth water.

We combine our dietitians' hats and our chefs' hats to create a wide range of great low-GL dishes to cook at home. We use simple, everyday ingredients, and you don't need to be a cordon bleu chef to make any of them – the recipes are quick, nutritious, easy to make, and delicious. By simply substituting one ingredient for another – such as using fructose instead of sugar – you can really lower the GL of some of your favourite recipes. We include plenty of fruit and vegetables in our recipes to help you towards achieving your five portions a day, and we include dairy foods to help keep your bones healthy.

Our recipes include a good mix of protein foods from both animal and vegetable sources, so we cater to you vegetarians, as well. We pull no punches with salt and sugar – if our recipe doesn't need them, you won't find them.

In Chapter 3 we give you everything you need to start your new GL healthy eating plan, and we make the process as simple and straightforward as possible. After a few weeks of feeling the benefits of eating low-GL you won't need our help any more – you can cruise the supermarket aisles with confidence, dine out in real GL-style, and know how to adapt certain foods to make them more GL friendly.

Living and Loving Low-GL

In our everyday lives, we follow the principles of the GL Diet and so do many of our clients, because the diet is so easy and so enjoyable. The GL Diet helps you to lose weight, reduces your risk of disease, and helps to improve existing symptoms if you suffer from diabetes, heart disease, or high blood pressure. (Check out Chapter 13 for more about the medical benefits of the GL Diet.)

Even if you feel fine but simply want to feel even better, the GL Diet is bound to hit the spot.

As dietitians, an eating plan must meet our high standards for us to feel happy about it. In that regard, the GL Diet:

- ✓ Is safe
- ✓ Is based on sound, scientific evidence
- ✓ Is easy to follow and maintain
- ✓ Suits both men and women
- ✓ Doesn't ban any foods
- ✓ Doesn't weigh food or count points or calories
- ✓ Doesn't throw you into a guilt trip because you can eat a little of anything, which is the best point of all! (Turn to Chapter 12 for more on the 80/20 Rule that gets rid of guilt.)

Here are some of the great physical benefits you can expect from the GL Diet:

- ✓ Increased energy
- ✓ Fewer food cravings, because you stay fuller and more satisfied for longer, which helps to control your weight
- ✓ Fewer mood swings
- ✓ The opportunity to permanently achieve a healthier weight
- ✓ A reduced risk of heart disease, diabetes, syndrome X, and female hormonal disturbances (see Chapter 13)

Completing the Healthy Lifestyle Picture

The food you eat is only part of the story of controlling your weight and staying healthy. We love the GL Diet, but to make your healthy lifestyle complete you need to ensure that physical activity is an integral part of your life. If you're overweight, losing just 5 per cent of your body weight has significant health benefits. Turn to Chapter 12 for the lowdown on getting active the fun and easy way.

Another part of the healthy lifestyle jigsaw is enjoying a good relationship with food. Perhaps developing the mindset to make a positive change to your lifestyle is one of the biggest hurdles that you need to overcome. In Chapter 12, we look at the emotional aspect of eating and give you some smart moves on how to keep your head in the right place and tips on handling guilt, which can put you on the path to getting your body in good shape, and keeping it that way.

Sometimes, when you decide to get your act together your mind can jump in and put a spanner in the works by finding reasons why not to do the right thing. You know what happens if you do what you've always done – that's right, you get what you've always got!



A healthy body comes from a healthy lifestyle. No magic wand or quick fix exists, but small changes really do count.

Listening to the Pros

Health professionals advise their patients about how to include the principles of low-glycaemic eating to help control weight and diabetes. Major food retailers recognise the validity of the low-glycaemic message with food labelling and advice to customers.

The Harvard School of Public Health is lobbying the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to change the current recommended Food Pyramid model to one based on low-glycaemic foods. (For the revised food pyramid, see the

Harvard School of Public Health Web site at www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/pyramids.html.) The World Health Organisation (WHO) and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) recommend that people in industrialised countries base their diets on low-glycaemic foods in order to prevent coronary heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.



The GL Diet is not simply a ‘here today, gone tomorrow’ fad. It’s a diet that’s here to stay. The GL Diet takes a difficult, scientific concept and relates the idea to our everyday lives, for our overall improved health.