

Most of you have probably heard that slowly digested carbohydrates (legumes, whole grains and other high fiber foods such as raw vegetables & fruits) are better for you than foods containing primarily white flour and simple sugars.

Simply put, **slow is better**. That's the "slow" part of my title. What about the "low"?

Most of you have probably also heard that inflammation is bad for you since it can increase your risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes and many more chronic diseases.

Ideally, we want to keep **systemic inflammation as low as possible**.

The study that I am writing about today shows that diets rich in slowly digested carbohydrates (or in scientific terminology - **diets with a low glycemic load**) **significantly lower C-reactive protein, a marker of systemic inflammation**.

Hence the title "**slow and low**".

Dr. Marian Neuhouser and colleagues at Fred Hutchison Cancer Research Center (Journal of Nutrition: doi: 10.3945/jn.111.149807) conducted a randomized control study with 80 participants - half men and half women - and half normal weight and half overweight.

Each of the study participants consumed both high glycemic load diets and low glycemic load diets for 28 day periods in random order (some consumed the high glycemic load diet first and then switched to the low glycemic load diet, while others started with the low glycemic load diet).

Other than the type of carbohydrates, the diets were identical. They were 15% healthy proteins, 30% healthy fats and 55% carbohydrate.

Markers of inflammation were low in the participants who were of normal weight and diet did not significantly affect them.

However, **markers of inflammation were elevated in the obese participants**. This was not unexpected because many studies have already shown that **obesity triggers inflammation**.

The low glycemic load diet significantly lowered C- reactive protein in the obese patients. In addition, levels of adiponectin, a hormone that helps the body regulate carbohydrate and fat metabolism, were slightly increased.

So what is the bottom line for you?

1) Your mother was right. Those **fresh fruits and veggies and whole grains really are better for you**.

Inflammation is a silent killer. And, even if it doesn't kill you, it can cause chronic diseases that destroy your quality of life.

And inflammation is just the tip of the iceberg. Those fresh fruits and veggies and whole grains are full of fiber, phytonutrients, trace minerals and antioxidants that provide many more health benefits.

So keep it "slow and low".

2) Of course, you might be tempted to interpret this study as saying that if you maintain normal weight you don't need to worry about consuming foods containing white flour and simple sugars.

Unfortunately, it's not that simple. These were very healthy diets designed by dietitians. Even the high glycemic load diet was pretty healthy.

These diets were a far cry from what most Americans are eating. For example, the kinds of fats in the typical American diet can also trigger inflammation.

My recommendation is to choose low glycemic carbohydrates as much as possible even if you are slender - and to also consume moderate amounts of healthy fats and healthy proteins.

To Your Health!

Dr. Stephen G Chaney