



## How healthy is the GI Diet?

By our nutrition expert Judy Watson

The GI Diet has overtaken the Atkins Diet. There are books galore and recipes on how to eat the GI way. I believe it is a much healthier way to eat than the Atkins Diet, which can give you constipation and bad breath: not very sociable. However, there are still rules to follow with the GI Diet and some food information can mislead.

So what does GI mean? The initials stand for Glycemic Index which refers to how quickly carbohydrates (foods containing sugar and starch) are released into the bloodstream.

Foods with high glucose have a high index rating up to 100. This is acceptable in small amounts over the day but too much glucose results in high blood sugar. Then insulin removes most of it, leaving you with a low blood sugar level and feeling hungry again.

So by eating foods with a low GI - mainly below 50 - such as nuts, beans and yoghurt, your body will release sugar more slowly, making you feel fuller for longer.

GI does not take into account quality and quantity of a food; examples are chocolate and baked potatoes. Potatoes

have a higher GI than chocolate but overall the potatoes are the healthier food. You can reduce the GI effect of the baked potato by having a small portion and combining it with tuna and salad.

To get the benefits of a low GI from chocolate you can only eat three squares! Be careful with biscuits claiming to have a low GI, particularly if you are tempted to eat more than a couple.

As a final tip, most low-GI foods are also high in fibre or contain a significant amount of protein which promotes weight loss and energy and helps lift your spirits.

For more tips on dieting and improving energy levels call Judy on 07904 335763 or visit [www.judywatsonnutritionist.co.uk](http://www.judywatsonnutritionist.co.uk).

## Eh? What? Pardon?

By John Dearing

Have you ever felt that people today mumble more than they used to? Are conversations in crowded, noisy places a real trial? Do you often have to ask someone to repeat what they just said?

Now you can find out whether you really have a hearing problem by taking a simple telephone test. Just call the RNID's telephone hearing check on 0845 600 5555. After keying in your age and gender, you listen to a series of numbers read out in blocks of three; you respond by keying those numbers on your telephone keypad. Background noise increases steadily as the test goes on, until you are really just guessing. At the end, you are told the result, which in my case was that my hearing is "within normal limits".

If you do find you have a hearing loss many practical changes can be made to your working environment,

including using an amplified telephone, or installing loop systems to help hearing aid users. These simple solutions will let you continue performing at your best and help you cope with your hearing loss.

### Don't be embarrassed

RNID's 'Breaking the Sound Barrier' campaign aims to reach the 4 million people in the UK who are losing their hearing but doing nothing about it. A recent Ipsos MORI survey shows that 46% of adults in Britain believe that embarrassment about not being able to hear prevents people with hearing difficulties discussing their problem with others, or having a hearing test.

## Epidemic of street clutter

By John Dearing

The Borough of Kensington & Chelsea's 'Streetscape' experiment, begun in 2003, has received much positive attention in the media. The scheme saw many railings, signposts and road markings being removed from Kensington High Street, and has resulted in a drop in accidents of around 44%.

This process is now being implemented in Earls Court, and South Kensington where, in Exhibition Road, junctions are being modified to facilitate the removal of traffic lights and other controls, to enable the area's involvement in the Olympics.

The policy has now become fashionable in a number of London boroughs, including Islington and our own Barnet, where Brent Street and Tally Ho corner, amongst other places, have been de-cluttered, to the benefit of pedestrians, motorists, shoppers and residents.

### East Finchley still cluttered

However, in that distant outpost of Barnet called East Finchley, the *status quo* still rules, as people who have to use the High Road (especially those with mobility or sight difficulties) will attest.

One of the worst areas is near Budgens supermarket where, to add insult to injury, the Orange mobile phone network proposes to erect a mast in the pedestrian area. The company's application, has been rejected once already; however, initial reactions from the council do not give confidence that the proposal will be rejected this time.

## Flower seller with famous connections

By John Lawrence

Jo Walker has been selling flowers every Saturday and Sunday at her stall in the High Road for the past two years, but her links to the trade go back almost 200 years.



Keeping it in the family: Jo Walker at her flower stall opposite the St Pancras & Islington cemetery.

Jo can trace costermongers and flower sellers back through many generations of her London family. One is said to have a very famous connection indeed.

Her great-great-great-great grandmother was called Eliza and the story in the Walker family is that she once met playwright George Bernard Shaw and became the inspiration for the character of Cockney flower girl Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion* and later *My Fair Lady*.

"There's always been an Eliza in every generation of my family and this story has been handed down through many years," says Jo.

Jo herself grew up with actor Phil Daniels, recently in East Enders, and is good friends with Spandau Ballet singer Tony Hadley. Recently, actress Lorraine Chase stopped to buy an armful of bouquets shortly before starting filming again on *Emmerdale*.

### A friendly patch

Jo has worked for 30 years as

a florist, starting with a three-year apprenticeship in the City with the Queen's florist Longmans.

Her current stall opposite the entrance to St Pancras and Islington Cemetery has been in the family for about the same time, having been run previously by Johnny Murphy.

Apart from a nasty experience two years ago when she was attacked and robbed at the stall, Jo says it is a friendly patch to work.

"I get on very well with the people round here. A lovely lady in the flats behind here comes down and gives me food and someone else often brings a flask of tea. You need it sometimes, standing here in all weathers."

So what of the next 30 years? Her 13-year-old son Terry works with her most weekends and her daughter Georgie also helps so there's every chance flower selling will stay in the Walker family for years to come.

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