COCHRANE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE FIELD

PEARLS Practical Evidence About Real Life Situations

Low glycaemic index and low glycaemic load diets effective for diabetes mellitus

Clinical question	How effective are low glycaemic index and low glycaemic load diets for glycaemic control in diabetes mellitus?
Bottom line	In adults and children, metabolic control (measured by glycated haemoglobin A1c [HbA1c]) decreased by 0.5% with a low glycaemic index diet, which is both statistically and clinically significant. Hypoglycaemic episodes significantly decreased with a low glycaemic index diet compared to a high glycaemic index diet. All interventions lasted for at least 4 weeks, and the longest trial was 12 months.
Caveat	Some methodological limitations were present, such as failure to conceal allocation and lack of reporting on blinding of outcome assessors. No study reported on mortality, morbidity or costs.
Context	The aim of diabetes management is to normalise blood glucose levels, since improved blood glucose control is associated with reduction in development, and progression, of complications. Nutritional factors affect blood glucose levels; however, there is currently no universal approach to the optimal dietary treatment for diabetes. There is controversy about how useful the glycaemic index is in diabetic meal planning. Improved glycaemic control through diet could minimise medications, lessen risk of diabetic complications, improve quality of life and increase life expectancy.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Thomas D and Elliott EJ. Low glycaemic index, or low glycaemic load, diets for diabetes mellitus. Cochrane Reviews 2009, Issue 1. Article No: CD006296. DOI: 10.1002/14651858. CD006296.pub2. This review contains 11 studies involving 402 participants.
PEARLS 157, April 2009, written by Brian R McAvoy	

[References]