



The Facts on Fats

For years we've been told that to feel better, lower our cancer risk, lose weight and prevent heart disease, we should follow a low fat diet. Unfortunately, this advice has led many folks to wrongly assume that all fats are bad, thus replacing healthy fats with refined and sweetened fat-free carbohydrates. As a result, obesity, metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes rates have skyrocketed.

Studies show all fats are not created equal and the type of fat we consume is more important than the amount. Fats are necessary for a healthy brain and nervous system as well as weight loss, blood sugar balance, absorption of fat-soluble vitamins, increased immunity and protection from inflammation.



The Bottom Line



Saturated fats are solid at room temperature. Dairy fats, meats, coconut, palm and palm kernel oils are primarily saturated.



Polyunsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature and liquid when refrigerated. Sunflower, safflower, flaxseed, walnut, fish, corn, cottonseed and soybean oils are primarily polyunsaturated. Many Americans are deficient in omega-3s, an important class of polyunsaturated fatty acids that are found in salmon, walnuts and flaxseed.



Monounsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature, but often solidify when refrigerated. They are found predominately in olive, canola, peanut and avocado oils, as well as high oleic sunflower and high oleic safflower oils.



Trans fats are rampant in our food supply! Made from partially hydrogenated liquid oil and found in shortening, margarine, baked goods, fried foods, and packaged, processed foods, these damaged fats are linked to inflammation and increased risk for cancer, diabetes, stroke, heart disease and other chronic diseases. It's safest to avoid whenever possible!



Consuming cholesterol has little effect on total amount of cholesterol circulating in the blood. Studies show that consuming an egg a day is not associated with a higher risk of heart disease. Check with your doctor, especially if you're diabetic!



CHOOSE OFTEN

Olive, canola and sesame oil (great for cooking)
Nuts, seeds, avocado and olives
Lean meats
Low fat dairy products
Wild-caught fish or canned fish such as salmon or sardines
Eggs containing omega-3 DHA (check the label on the egg carton)

CHOOSE IN MODERATION

A little butter or cream
Small amounts of full fat dairy products

AVOID WHENEVER POSSIBLE

Margarine containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils
Solid vegetable shortening
Commercial peanut butter made with hydrogenated oil
Packaged baked goods and overly processed foods
Fried foods

SUBSTITUTIONS FOR COOKING

Replace shortening or margarine with equal amounts of canola oil when baking
Bake, broil or lightly sauté meats instead of frying
If avoiding egg yolks, two egg whites equals one whole egg
Substitute low fat dairy for full fat dairy products
Replace half the fat in baked goods with unsweetened applesauce or fruit purées