

Fats

The nutrient “fat” sometimes receives much bad publicity, but did you know that “fat” is actually an essential nutrient that is vitally important for our bodies?

Understanding fats is important to ensure you are consuming the right ones in order to help your body function at its best. There are essentially two types of fat; Saturated and Unsaturated. These types are then further broken down into Monounsaturated, Polyunsaturated and Trans Fats.

Monounsaturated fat is good for the body and can be found in items such as olive and canola oil, avocados, pistachios and cashews.

Polyunsaturated fats are also good for the body and can be found in fatty fish like salmon, mackerel, trout, herring and sardines (Omega-3's). As well as safflower, sunflower and corn oils, almonds and pecans, sunflower and sesame seeds (Omega-6's).

If a product has less than 0.2g of trans fat and less than 0.5g of saturated fat; the food manufacturer can say that the product is trans fat free.

Saturated fat is an unhealthy fat, which naturally occurs in animal products such as fatty cuts of meat, poultry with skin and high fat milk, cheese and yogurt. It is also found in tropical oils such as coconut and palm. They have a chemical makeup in which the carbon atoms are saturated with hydrogen atoms and are typically solid at room temperature.

Trans fat is an unhealthy fat, which is made out of liquid oil and then changed into a solid fat. The chemical process is called “partial hydrogenation”. It is used to add texture and flavor to foods like commercially baked goods, fried foods, processed snacks and frozen food. Meat, milk and butter naturally contain small amounts of trans fat but the type which occurs naturally in foods is different than that which is manufactured.

It's easy to get too much of the “bad fats” in our diet. A diet high in saturated fat raises the level of cholesterol in your blood, which increases your risk of heart disease and stroke.

Health Canada Recommended amount of fat (as a %age of total daily calories)

Ages 1 to 3 – 30% to 40%
Ages 4 to 18 – 25% to 35%
Ages 19 and older – 20% to 35%

Recently our food supply has been changing and more products are claiming to be “trans fat free” or “trans fat reduced”. It is still important to look at the Nutrition Facts table to make sure the food product you are buying has only a little or NO trans fat.

Nutrition Facts	
Per 2 tsp (10 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 70	
Fat 8 g	12 %
Saturated 1 g	5 %
Trans 0 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 65 mg	3 %
Carbohydrate 0 g	0 %
Fibre 0 g	0 %
Sugars 0 g	
Protein 0 g	
Vitamin A 10 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 0 %	Iron 0 %

The “Daily Value” for the amount of saturated fat and trans fat combined used in nutrition labeling is 20g (based on a 2000 calorie diet). As an example if a product's Nutrition Facts table shows 1g of saturated fat and 0g of trans fat, the % daily value for saturated fat and trans fat combined is 5% (Calculation – 1g /20g x 100 = 5%). Therefore if you eat this product, you will take in 5% of the recommended daily total of saturated and trans fat.

“Good fats” play an important role for your body by giving you energy, helping your body absorb vitamins A, D, E and K as well as helping your body grow and develop.

Resources
www.hc-sc.gc.ca
www.heart.org
www.eatrightontario.ca

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Fun Food Facts!



Different parts of the world have their own local cuisine. The diets and general food habits of various cultures depend on social, religious, economic and safety factors as well as the availability of different foods. Examples of food and cuisine that are popular in certain areas of the world include hummus in the Middle East, Apple Pie in the USA, raw fish in Japan, cheese in France, roast meat and vegetables in England, curry in India and tortillas in Mexico

Did You Know?



Tips on managing fat intake:

- ✓ Choose lower-fat meat and dairy products
- ✓ Use vegetable oil or soft margarines that are low in saturated and trans fats.
- ✓ Use the % daily value in the Nutrition Facts table on food product labels.
- ✓ Eat fewer pre-packaged foods
- ✓ Eat fish every week.
- ✓ Include meat alternatives like beans, lentils and nuts in your diet
- ✓ Fill a spray bottle with vegetable oil to spray pans instead of greasing
- ✓ Make your own salad dressings

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