

Healthy Eating: How to Cut Back on Fats



Almost everything you eat contains different kinds of fats. Some types of fats are better for you than others. Try to limit foods that contain a lot of fat.

What are the main types of fats?

Saturated fat

Saturated fat is solid at room temperature, such as meat grease, butter, shortening, and stick margarine. It can raise your cholesterol.

Fat that comes from animals, such as the fat in meat and dairy products, is mostly saturated. The fat in poultry meat is less saturated than the fat in red meats, but the fat in poultry skin is saturated fat. Fish has the lowest amount of saturated fat, and it has some healthy fats. Saturated fat is also found in coconut oil, palm oil, and cocoa butter. No more than 10% of your calories should come from saturated fat. This is about 20 grams of fat in 2,000 calories.

Polyunsaturated fat

Polyunsaturated fat is liquid at room temperature. This fat is better for you than saturated fat. It is found mainly in safflower, sunflower, and corn oils. It is also the main fat

in seafood. Omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids are examples. Omega-3 fatty acids may lower your chances of getting heart disease. Fatty fish such as salmon and mackerel contain healthy omega-3 fatty acids. So do ground flaxseeds and flaxseed oil, soybeans, nuts, and seeds.

No more than 10% of your fat should come from polyunsaturated fat. This is about 20 grams in a 2,000-calorie diet.

Monounsaturated fat

Monounsaturated fat is liquid at room temperature but gets solid when you refrigerate it. Eating foods that are high in this fat may help lower your bad cholesterol, raise your good cholesterol, and lower your chances of getting heart disease. This fat is found in canola oil, olive oil, peanut oil, olives, and avocados. Monounsaturated fats are far better for you than saturated fat, and can be up to 15% of your calories. This is about 25 to 30 grams in a 2,000-calorie diet.

Trans fat

Trans fat is unsaturated fat that has been made saturated by a process called hydrogenation. This is done to increase the shelf life of fat and to change how hard it is at room temperature. Harder fat makes crispier crackers and better pie crusts. It is easier to spread on toast. Trans fat is also called hydrogenated fat or hydrogenated oil. It is as bad for you as saturated fat. It is found in packaged snack foods such as chips, crackers, and cookies.

What is the recommended daily allowance for fat?

About a third of your daily calories can come from fat. And only a third of your total fat each day should be from saturated fats. Limit the amount of trans fats you eat. Check

www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for ideas, or ask your doctor if you should talk to a registered dietitian.

Food group	Foods that are high in fat	Healthier alternatives
Meat, poultry, and fish	Regular ground beef, fatty or highly marbled cuts, spare ribs, organ meat, poultry with skin, fried chicken and fish, lunch meat, sausage, hot dogs	Low-fat ground beef (97% lean), meats with fat trimmed off before cooking, skinless chicken, low-fat or fat-free lunch meats
Dairy products and eggs	Whole and 2% milk, yogurt, and cheese; sour cream; ice cream; cream; half and half; whipping cream; nondairy creamer; whipped topping; egg yolks	Low-fat or nonfat milk and cheeses, low-fat or nonfat frozen yogurt and ice cream, egg substitutes
Fats and oils	Coconut oil, palm oil, butter, lard, shortening, bacon, hard margarine, certain dressings, peanut butter made with hydrogenated vegetable oil	Canola, olive, and peanut oils; soft margarines with no trans fats and no more than 1/3 of the total fat from saturated fat
Breads and cereals	Breads with eggs, fat, or butter as a major ingredient; most granolas and crackers; pastries; muffins	Regular breads, cereals, cooked grains like rice, corn tortillas, pasta, and low-fat crackers
Fruits and vegetables	Fried vegetables; coconut; vegetables cooked with butter, cheese, or cream sauce	All fruits and vegetables that do not have added fat
Sweets and desserts	Milk chocolate; ice cream; cookies; baked goods made with coconut oil or palm oil	Frozen yogurt, low-fat alternatives, and fruit