

Dig Deeper into Different Fats

Unsaturated Fats, the Good Guys

Two unsaturated fats are polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. These are found in foods such as olive oil, canola oil, soybean oil, safflower oil, salmon, trout, herring, walnuts, almonds and other nuts, flaxseeds, olives and avocado. Unsaturated fats are shown to have beneficial effects on cholesterol levels and health. Try to make these types of fats your main source of dietary fat intake.

**Even good fats have higher calories than other nutrients (nine calories per gram).
Most recommendations are to limit daily fat intake to 25-30% of total calories.**



Saturated Fats, the Not-So-Good Guys

These fats are mostly found in animal foods and full-fat dairy products. Some plant-based oils, such as coconut oil, palm oil, and palm kernel oil, also contain saturated fats. Our body makes saturated fats as well. Consuming too many foods high in saturated fats may lead to increased LDL (bad) cholesterol levels and heart disease.

Most guidelines suggest limiting saturated fat intake to less than 7% of daily calories.



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Trans Fats, the Bad Guys

These fats are created through a process called hydrogenation. This is a manufacturing procedure that transforms liquid oils into solids at room temperature. Trans fats increase LDL (bad) cholesterol levels, and some research suggests that these types of fats are the most harmful type. The hydrogenation process is used by companies to help preserve food, increase shelf life and alter food's texture. Food companies must list trans fats on the nutrition facts panel; however **a product may still contain less than .5 grams of trans fats per serving and qualify as having zero trans fat grams.**

That is why it is important to read the ingredients list and look for the words "partially hydrogenated," which often describe vegetable oils. Common culprits are packaged cakes, crackers, ready-to-eat cereals, fried foods, peanut butter, frozen meals and stick margarine. Foods with partially hydrogenated oils contain trace amounts of trans fats. If several servings are consumed, it is easy to take in more trans fats than expected. Usually, "fully hydrogenated" oils listed in the ingredients do not contain trans fats and are counted in the saturated fat total on the label.

Generally, it is recommended to consume as few trans fats as possible with daily trans fat intake less than 1% of total calories.

Margarine, Butter and Oil – Oh My!

Usually, it's best to use tub margarine instead of stick margarine but read labels to find one with 0g of trans fat and no partially hydrogenated oils. Choose vegetable oil over butter and measure, use mister canisters and non-stick cooking spray to reduce the total amount used.



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