

# Nutrition Matters

Nutrition Services, Community and Health Services

## Dietary Fat...Where are we now?



**Wait! Don't Cut Out All of the Fat: Fat IS Important!**

Despite what you may have heard, we do need some fat in our diets. Dietary fat plays essential roles in our body:

- Fat supplies a concentrated source of energy
- Fat provides essential fatty acids - omega-3 and omega-6 - which are needed throughout life and cannot be made by our bodies
- Fat is needed for proper growth and development in children
- Fat is required for the absorption of vitamins A, D, E and K



Although our bodies need fat, too much may lead to unwanted weight gain. Being overweight may increase your risk of type 2 diabetes and some types of cancer. Too much unhealthy saturated and trans fats may also increase your risk of heart disease and certain cancers.

### All fats are not the same!

✓ Unsaturated fats such as monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are "healthy fats". Examples include the following:

- All vegetable oils (i.e. canola, olive)
- Non-hydrogenated margarines
- Nuts and seeds

### All fats are not the same!

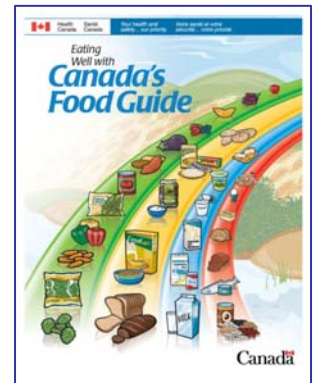
✗ Saturated and trans fats are the "unhealthy fats". Examples include the following foods:

- Full-fat dairy products, fatty meats
- Some commercially prepared crackers and baked goods

Please refer to the chart on the next page, for more detail on the different kinds of fat.

### How much dietary fat do adults need?

*Canada's Food Guide* says: "include a small amount - 30 to 45 mL (2 to 3 tablespoons) - of unsaturated fat each day. This includes oil used for cooking, salad dressings, margarine and mayonnaise." Health Canada further recommend that for adults, 20% to 35% of our daily calories come from dietary fat.



### Children need different amounts of fat than adults

Children aged one to three require 30% to 40% of their daily calories from fat. Children and teens aged four to 18 require 25% to 35% of their daily calories from fat.



A healthy diet includes choosing a small amount of "healthy fats" while limiting "unhealthy fats".



## Choose Unsaturated Fat

Type of fat	Major food sources	Health benefits
Monounsaturated fat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Olive, canola and peanut oils</li> <li>Some non-hydrogenated margarines</li> <li>Some nuts and seeds (e.g. cashews, pecans, almonds and peanuts)</li> <li>Avocados</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Help raise HDL (good) and lower LDL (bad) cholesterol in the blood, which has been linked to lowered risk of heart disease</li> </ul>
Polyunsaturated fats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Omega-3 fat               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DHA and EPA</li> </ul> </li> <li>ALA (linolenic acid)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fish such as herring, trout, salmon, sardines, mackerel (pacific or jack) and oysters</li> <li>Certain brands of milk and eggs</li> <li>Canola, soybean and flaxseed oils</li> <li>Ground flaxseed</li> <li>Some nuts and seeds (e.g. walnuts)</li> <li>Some margarines, yogurt, cheese and milk beverages (check the label)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Omega-3 fats help lower the risk of heart disease and stroke through lowering blood triglycerides, reducing inflammation, helping to maintain a regular heart beat and keeping artery walls relaxed</li> <li>Preliminary research suggests that these fats may also reduce risk of certain cancers and treat depression and arthritis</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Omega-6 fat (linoleic acid)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Soybean, safflower, sunflower, sesame and corn oil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps maintain healthy skin, hair and nails</li> </ul>

## Limit Saturated Fat and Dietary Cholesterol

Type of fat	Major food sources	Potential health risks
Saturated fat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full-fat animal products such as fatty meats, poultry, cheese, butter</li> <li>Eggs</li> <li>Some processed foods such as cold cuts (e.g. salami, bologna, bacon)</li> <li>Palm and palm kernel oils</li> <li>Coconut oil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May raise LDL (bad) cholesterol, which has been linked to increased risk of heart disease</li> </ul>
Cholesterol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Animal products such as full-fat meat, eggs and milk products</li> <li>Shellfish such as shrimp and squid</li> <li>Liver</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May raise LDL (bad) cholesterol in the blood of high risk individuals</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Cholesterol from food has only a small influence on cholesterol levels in the blood</p>

## Avoid Trans Fat

Type of fat	Major food sources	Potential health risks
Trans fat (hydrogenated fat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some fast foods and processed, fried and snack foods</li> <li>Ready-prepared foods made with partially hydrogenated vegetable oil or shortening</li> <li>Some baked goods such as muffins, doughnuts, pastries and crackers</li> <li>Hard margarines made from partially hydrogenated vegetable oils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raises LDL (bad) cholesterol and lowers HDL (good) cholesterol in the blood</li> <li>High consumption of trans fat increases the risk for heart disease <b>three fold!</b></li> </ul>

## Health Canada Limits the Amount of Trans Fat in Food



In June 2007, Health Canada called on the food industry to limit the trans fat in vegetable oils and soft, spreadable margarines to 2% of the total fat content. All other processed and prepared foods are limited to 5% trans fat, including ingredients sold to restaurants.

Over the next two years, if significant progress has not been made in reducing trans fat in the food supply, Health Canada will implement strict regulations.

### Should my child be on a low fat diet?

No! Fat is a very important nutrient for both children and adults. The difference between adults and children is that there should be less emphasis on lower fat foods for children under 6 years of age.

When preparing food for your children, keep the following in mind:

- Young children need extra calories for their rapid growth, especially from nutrient packed foods such as milk and peanut butter
- Emphasize fats from vegetable sources such as canola or olive oil, avocado, nuts and seeds as these are heart friendly fats
- To establish lifelong eating habits, be a role model for your children and include a variety of vegetables and fruit in your meals and snacks
- Occasionally serving French fries with a meal or ice cream for dessert is okay as part of a healthy diet



### Take a closer look at the Label!

Read the **Nutrition Facts** panel on food labels to identify the amount and type of fat in the product. Here you will find the amount of total fat, saturated and trans fat. Some products may even display the amount of monounsaturated, polyunsaturated, omega-3 and omega-6 fat.

Nutrition Facts	
Per 125mL (87g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 80	
Fat 0.5 g	1%
Saturated 0 g	0%
+ Trans 0 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 0 mg	0%
Carbohydrate 18 g	6%
Fibre 2 g	8%
Sugars 2 g	
Protein 3 g	
Vitamin A 2%	Vitamin C 10%
Calcium 0%	Iron 2%

Use the food label to compare similar products. Make sure that the serving sizes of the products you are comparing are the same. Choose the product that has the lower amount of saturated fat and as close to zero as possible of trans fat.

## How do I know if I am eating the right amount of fat?

Eat the right amount of fat each day by following *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*:

- To replace higher fat foods, adults should aim for at least seven servings of vegetables and fruit each day. One serving is equal to one medium sized fruit, half cup of vegetables or one cup of salad. Enjoy vegetables and fruit for a snack or add fruit to a dessert
- Choose leaner cuts of meat, such as sirloin tip, inside round, flank steak, pork tenderloin, veal or lean ham
- Remove skin from poultry before cooking and trim any visible fat
- Have meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu more often
- Use lower fat milk products such as milk, cottage cheese and yogurt with 2% M.F. or less. Look for cheese with 20% M.F. or less



### Cook à la low-fat!

Bake	Microwave
Broil	Steam
Braise	Poach
Barbeque	Grill
Boil	

## Here are some easy ways to choose unsaturated fats:

Choose...	Instead of...
Soft, non-hydrogenated margarines	Butter, shortening, hard margarine or lard
Olive or canola oil for stir frying and sautéing	Butter, lard, hard margarine
Salad dressings made with olive oil or canola oil	High fat, creamy dressings
Small portions of unsalted nuts, seeds or soy nuts	High-fat, salty snack foods such as chips
Fish such as salmon, mackerel or trout	High fat cuts of meat such as ribs or hot dogs
Walnuts or sesame seeds for salad toppings	Croutons or bacon

## Sensational snack ideas!

- Fresh fruit, fruit salad or dried fruit
- Raw vegetables with low-fat salad dressing
- Chocolate milk blended with frozen strawberries
- Low-fat yogurt with granola
- Sherbet, sorbet or frozen yogurt
- Pretzels, plain popcorn, pita puffs
- Rice cakes with peanut butter
- Low-fat whole grain crackers with low-fat cheese
- Homemade muffins (use no more than 1/4 cup of fat for 12 muffins)
- Baked tortilla chips with salsa

