

Nutrition News

Information for Senior Citizens

Developed by Colorado State University Extension
Department of Food Science & Human Nutrition

The Truth About Fat

It seems like we hear a lot about fat these days--saturated fat, unsaturated fat, body fat, dietary fat, low fat, and high fat! Fifty years ago we didn't hear much about fat; now it's hard to pick up a newspaper or turn on the TV without hearing about a new disease caused by too much fat or a new diet to get rid of fat. What is the truth, if any, about fat?

The truth is, fat helps keep our bodies healthy, but eating too much fat may lead to obesity, which is unhealthy. It is necessary to include some fat in your diet. Specific fats, which our bodies cannot synthesize, are essential for proper function. Fat is also important because it carries fat-soluble vitamins, provides energy, and forms a protective layer around important organs. Lastly, fat adds flavor to food and make you feel "full." The 2005 Dietary Guidelines recommend that we keep total fat between 20 – 35 % of calories.

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Types of Fat

Saturated Fat and Trans Fat: Saturated fats are solid at room temperature. They come primarily from animal products, but are also found in tropical plant oils such as palm and coconut. Trans fat acts as saturated fat.



Saturated fat is the main dietary cause of high cholesterol, and thus it increases your risk for heart disease. The American Heart Association recommends that you limit your saturated fat intake to 7-10 percent of your total calories each day. If you have heart disease or elevated LDL cholesterol, your doctor may recommend that you limit your saturated fat intake even more.

Unsaturated Fat: Unsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature. There are two types of unsaturated fats: monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. Vegetable oils are high in unsaturated fat. Monounsaturated fats include canola, olive and peanut oil, and polyunsaturated fats include safflower, sesame, sunflower, corn and soy oil.



Unsaturated fat may help lower your blood cholesterol level when you use them in place of saturated fats in your diet.

Hydrogenated Fat: Unsaturated fats are sometimes processed to make them solid at room temperature, a process called hydrogenation. A type of fat called trans fatty acids are formed during this process. Trans fatty acids have been shown to increase blood cholesterol. Margarine and shortening are examples of fats which have been hydrogenated.



How Much Fat is Too Much?

So, fat is necessary in the right amount, but harmful if we eat too much. But how much is too much?

The American Heart Association recommends that we eat a diet in which no more than 30% of total calories come from fat. The 2005 Dietary Guidelines recommend a general reduction in fat, especially saturated fat.

The amount of fat that you need depends on how many calories you need each day, which in turn depends on your age, sex, and activity level. Use the guide below to help you get a better idea about how much fat you need in your diet. Start by selecting the calorie level that best fits your needs. For a review of serving sizes refer to volume 1, issue 1, of *Nutrition News*. Also, a more extensive list can now be found on MyPyramid.gov web site.

Food Group	1200 Calories	1600 Calories	2000 Calories
Bread Group	6 servings	6-7 servings	8 servings
Vegetable Group	3 servings	4-3 servings	3-4 servings
Fruit Group	2 servings	2-3 servings	3 servings
Dairy Group	2 servings	2-3 servings	2-3 servings
Protein Group	2 servings	2-3 servings	2-3 servings
Fat	40 grams	53 grams	67 grams
Sugar	3 tsp.	6 tsp.	9 tsp.

Quick Tip:

A great way to stretch your fat budget is to use non-fat cooking spray, especially with a non-stick skillet. It lets you fry foods with no added fat. It can be used to spray muffin and cake pans, too!

Tips to Reduce Fat in Your Diet

Follow the tips below to decrease the amount of fat you eat.

- Buy lean or extra lean meat.
- Drain fat from cooked meats.
- Broil or grill meat rather than pan-fry.
- Remove skin from chicken and cut off all visible fat.
- Try cutting oil or fat in half when preparing a recipe - you usually can't tell the difference.
- Use two egg whites instead of one whole egg.
- Try replacing fried foods and high fat foods with fruits and vegetables.
- Choose low-fat or fat-free dairy products.
- Buy tuna packed in water instead of oil.
- Watch for added fats such as salad dressing, mayonnaise and butter.

Understanding Fat Terms

Next time you go to the grocery store, watch for the following terms on food packages. They describe products that can help you reduce your fat intake.

Low Fat: 3 grams of fat or less per serving

Low saturated fat: 1 gram of fat or less per serving

Lean: less than 10 grams of total fat and less than 4 grams of saturated fat per 100 gram serving

Extra lean: less than 5 grams of total fat and less than 2 grams of saturated fat per 100 gram serving



Sample Menu



Breakfast

- 1 Tortilla Scrambler
- ¾ cup orange juice

Snack

- 1 banana

Lunch

- Tuna salad sandwich - 2 pieces whole wheat bread, ½ can chunk white tuna in water, 1 Tbsp light mayonnaise
- ½ cup carrot sticks
- ½ cup apple sauce

Snack

- South of the Border Rice Cakes

Dinner

- 1 boneless skinless chicken breast grilled or broiled
- ½ cup wild rice
- 1 cup tossed green salad with 1 Tbsp low fat salad dressing
- ½ cup sorbet

South of the Border Rice Cakes

Ingredients:

- 2 ounces reduced-fat cheddar cheese, sliced or shredded
- 2 rice cakes
- 1 Tbsp sliced fresh or canned jalapeno peppers

Directions:

1. Cover rice cakes with cheese and sprinkle with jalapenos.
2. Broil about one minute or microwave 30 seconds, until the cheese melts.

Yields 1 serving (8 grams fat, 210 calories)

Tortilla Scrambler

Ingredients:

- 1 7" flour tortilla
- 1 large egg, slightly beaten
- nonfat cooking spray
- 1 slice (1 oz) lean ham

Directions:

1. Warm tortilla in skillet, oven, or microwave to soften.
2. Spray skillet with cooking spray, heat until a drop of water sizzles.
3. Add egg and stir with fork until scrambled and firm.
4. Layer meat and egg in tortilla
5. Roll up tortilla

Yields 1 serving (7 grams fat, 230 calories)

Fitness Focus: Increase Muscle Tone

Did you know that muscle burns more calories than fat? One pound of muscle needs extra calories to supply energy; one pound of fat needs very few calories. So, the less fat and more muscle our bodies contain, the more calories we burn.

The two exercises below will help increase muscle tone in your upper body. Upper body strength is important for good posture and for lifting and carrying objects. Always remember to check with your doctor before starting a new exercise program.

1. **Arm Extension:** *to tone muscles in the back of the arm.* Sit or stand erect with arms at sides. Holding a weighted object of less than 5 pounds, extend your arm overhead. Slowly bend arm until weight is behind head. Slowly extend arm to original position. Suggested repetitions: 10 - 15.

2. **Modified Knee Push-up:** *to strengthen upper back, chest, and back of arms.* Start on bent knees, hands on floor under and slightly forward of shoulders. Lower body until chin touches floor. Return to start. Suggested repetitions: 5 - 10.



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Senior Resource: Are food stamps cash?

No. Food stamps can only be used to purchase food. In some areas, food stamp benefits come on a plastic card that you use just like a bank card or credit card. Most food stores accept food stamps.

For more information and to find out if you or someone you know qualifies for food stamps, call 1-800-221-5689.