

Why should I know about fats in food?

Fat is found in many foods and is a source of energy. Fat is a vital part of a nutritious eating plan. It helps your body absorb key nutrients, such as fat-soluble vitamins. Fat also gives food flavor and will help you feel full after a meal. Some fats are better for your heart than others. Unhealthy fats, such as *saturated fats (SFA)* and *trans-fat*, can raise your “bad” LDL-cholesterol and increase your risk for heart disease. Healthier fats are *monounsaturated (MUFA)* and *polyunsaturated (PUFA)* fats. Using these fats in place of SFA can lower your “bad” LDL-cholesterol and lower your risk of heart disease.

How to Find Healthy and Unhealthy Fats in Food

Using the New Nutrition Facts Label

Read the food label to see the grams of all fats in a serving. All high-fat foods have a mix of fats. *Healthier* foods are higher in MUFA and PUFA. *Less healthy* foods are higher in SFA and may have *trans-fat*. Choose foods that have more MUFA and PUFA and less SFA. Avoid foods with *trans-fat*—found as *partially hydrogenated oil* in the ingredient list. The **daily SFA limit for heart-healthy eating is less than 7% of your total daily calories**. For energy needs of 1,600 calories per day, the saturated fat limit is about 12 grams. High-fat foods can be high in calories. Be aware of your portion sizes to keep your calorie intake at goal and avoid weight gain.

Nutrition Facts	
4 servings per container	
Serving size 1 1/2 cup (208g)	
Amount per serving	
Calories	240
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 4g	5%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 5mg	2%
Sodium 430mg	19%
Total Carbohydrate 46g	17%
Dietary Fiber 7g	25%
Total Sugars 4g	
Includes 2g Added Sugars	4%
Protein 11g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 6mg	35%
Potassium 240mg	6%

*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Examples of Foods with Healthy Fats and Unhealthy Fats

Foods rich in **healthy fats** are avocados, fatty fish like salmon, many kinds of raw and unsalted nuts and nut butters like peanut and almond butters, seeds such as flax and pumpkin seeds, and *liquid* vegetable oils like canola, corn, olive, peanut, safflower, sesame, soybean, and sunflower oil.

Foods rich in **unhealthy fats** are fatty and processed meats like bacon, sausage, salami, and hotdogs, some dairy foods like full-fat cheese, whole milk, and cream, *solid* fats like butter, lard, coconut, and palm oils, foods with *partially hydrogenated* oils, and deep fried foods like donuts, fried fish, and French fries.



Tips for Choosing Healthy Fats in Meals and Snacks

Choose whole-grain toast topped with 2 TBSP avocado or almond butter instead of donuts or pastries.

Use skim or 1% milk, low-fat yogurt, or soymilk with no added sugar.

At lunch, add avocado to sandwiches and salads instead of cheese.

Add skinless poultry or fatty fish like salmon and tuna to a mixed green salad.

Grill fish or skinless chicken for dinner more often than steak or pork.

Choose lean cuts of red meat like “round” or “loin” with all visible fat trimmed OR lean ground meats.

Prepare lean meats by baking, broiling, grilling, or sautéing in 1 TBSP liquid vegetable oil.

Snack on 1 oz. raw or unsalted nuts or seeds, low-fat yogurt with fresh fruit, or hummus and raw veggies.

A registered dietitian nutritionist can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle, and support you in your journey to a healthful dietary pattern.

This information is part of the *Clinician’s Lifestyle Modification Toolbox* courtesy of the National Lipid Association.

For more resources visit Lipid.org and LearnYourLipids.com