

Facts on Fats – Healthy vs. Unhealthy Fats

There are three macronutrients - protein, carbohydrates, and fats - that provide us with energy. Despite the bad reputation, fats are important for your overall health. You need small amount of them everyday, so your body can absorb fat-soluble vitamins such as A, D, E and K. Not all fats are equal, some are healthier, and some should be limited in your diet.

There are four types of fat. Healthy and essential fats are **Monounsaturated** and **Polyunsaturated Fats (unsaturated fats)**, and unhealthy ones are **Saturated** and **Trans fats**.

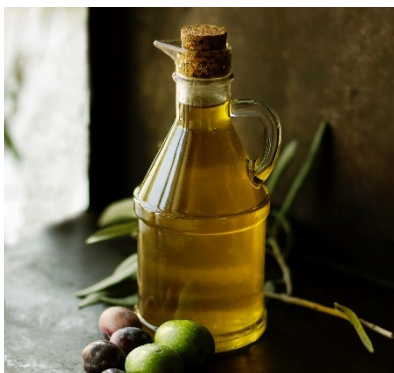


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Monounsaturated Fat

This plant-based fat is a healthy option as it can reduce your risk of heart disease by reducing level of bad cholesterol in your blood and provide your body with nutrients to develop and maintain healthy cells.

Food sources of monounsaturated fats are olive and canola oil, avocado, nuts (walnuts, pecans, almonds, and cashews).

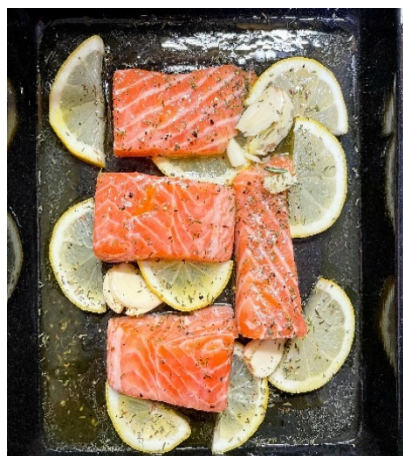


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Polyunsaturated fat

Your body can not produce these fats and it is essential to include them in your diet. Polyunsaturated fats include Omega-3 and Omega-6 fats.

Omega-3 fats are naturally found in fatty fish like salmon, trout, herring and mackerel. They are sometimes added to eggs and milk product.

Omega-6 fats are naturally found in nuts, seeds, safflower and sunflower oils.



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Saturated Fat

One of the unhealthy fats is saturated fat as it can increase level of bad cholesterol in your body. It is naturally found in animal-based foods such as fatty cuts of red meat, chicken skin, high fat milk product, also in tropical oils (coconut, palm and kernel oils).



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Trans Fat

Trans fats are the unhealthiest fats that can contribute to heart disease. It is formed through an industrial process that changes the liquid oil to solid by adding hydrogen to it. It is added to processed foods to improve taste and texture and to help with the longer shelf life.

Trans fat is usually found in:

- ▶ Deep fried foods (French fries, chicken nuggets, spring roles, samosas)
- ▶ Frozen packaged foods (pizza, patties, egg rolls)
- ▶ Hard margarine and shortening
- ▶ Commercial packaged baked goods and salty snacks (donuts, cakes, chips, crackers)

Small amounts of trans fat can be found naturally in some foods such as meat and butter that may not contribute to heart disease.

Adding partially hydrogenated oils as the main source of trans fat to food products has been banned by the Health Canada Since September 2018.

Tips to Make Healthier Fat Choices:

- ➔ Read your food labels and aim to have zero trans fat in your diet. Look for lower fat milk products such as less than 2% MF (milk fat) milk and yogurt and less than 20% MF cheese.
- ➔ Cook your meals at home and use fresh ingredients instead of ready to eat frozen processed foods.
- ➔ Choose healthy cooking methods at home such as boiling, grilling, and baking instead of frying or deep frying foods.
- ➔ Remove visible fats from meat and skin from poultry.
- ➔ Use unsaturated vegetable oils when cooking at home instead of butter, lard, ghee and hard margarine.

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Take Home Message:

To have healthy heart, include small amount (2 to 3 Tbsp) of unsaturated fats in your diet everyday including oils used in cooking and dressing. Limit saturated fat intake and avoid foods including trans fats. All oils provide 9 calorie per gram, so they contribute to weight gain if you don't watch your portion size.

Reviewing these resources will help you to make healthier choices when it comes to fats and oils:

References:

- <https://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Articles/Heart-Health/Facts-on-Fats.aspx>
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- <https://www.heartandstroke.ca/healthy-living/healthy-eating/fats-and-oils>
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