

The Macronutrients



Fats – The good, the bad & the ugly.

Poor fats! They've been the target of dieticians and doctors for too many years, but without good cause, in many instances. Let's clear up some misconceptions.

In a nutshell, if it's a good fat, it's healthy to eat, and all natural sources of fats are healthy to a certain extent. It's when man comes in and tries to make his own version of fat (trans fats) that everything gets messed up. So let's go over the fat list again.

✓✓ **Monounsaturated fats: Good Fats**

These are the good guys. They're liquid at room temperature and they lower cholesterol levels in the body.

Avocado	Pistachios
Cashews	Pumpkin seeds
Macadamia nuts	Walnuts and walnut oil
Peanuts & peanut oil	Canola oil
Olive oil	

✓✓ **Polyunsaturated Fats: Good Fats**

Polyunsaturated fats are also healthy fats. They too are liquid at room temperature and lower cholesterol levels.

Corn oil	Safflower oil
Cottonseed oil	Sunflower oil and seeds
Flaxseeds and flaxseed oil	Sesame oil and seeds
Fish and fish oils	Soybean oil and seeds
Grapeseed oil	Walnut oil and seeds

✓ × **Saturated fats: Good and Bad Fats**

These guys are solid at room temperature, come mainly from animal fats, and they should be eaten in smaller amounts. But meats in particular have been given a bad rap because of their supposed cholesterol-raising abilities. But again, we have to differentiate between commercial meats and traditional meats (those animals raised and grass-fed as nature intended, without antibiotics, hormones and toxins).

If one eats these traditional (wild, organic) meats, the levels of saturated fats are minimal, the healthy Omega 3 fat levels are higher (see *Omega 3's and 6's – The New Kids on the Block*), and they don't contain dangerous antibiotics and hormones (commercial meats routinely use antibiotics and hormones, it's a standard practice). So choose wild, traditional or local meats at all times. You'll taste the difference!

* **Note:** Coconut oil is also a saturated fat, and is one of the healthiest fats you can eat. So don't believe what they say about coconut oil, it's good for you! And it helps you to burn fat too!

Animal fat	Palm oil
Fatty meats	lamb
Coconut oil	Pork
Vegetable shortening	Veal

✘ ✘ Trans fats –Ugly Fats

These nasty stabilizing fats are found in cookies, candy, crackers, fast food and processed foods, any food that sits in your cupboard for a long time needs trans fats to stop it from going bad in a few days.. Anything that says '*hydrogenated*' or '*modified*' is a trans fat, so read your labels. And remember, if a food has less than 2 grams of trans fats in a serving (see Oreo cookie story) the label can legally say there's zero (0) trans fats! Another loophole in our food regulations!



Total Fat, Saturated Fat, <i>Trans</i> Fat, and Cholesterol Content Per Serving*								
Product	Common Serving Size	Total Fat g	Sat. Fat g	%DV for Sat. Fat	Trans Fat g	Combined Sat. & <i>Trans</i> Fat g	Chol. mg	%DV for Chol.
French Fried Potatoes± (Fast Food)	Medium (147 g)	27	7	35%	8	15	0	0%
Butter**	1 tbsp	11	7	35%	0	7	30	10%
Margarine, stick†	1 tbsp	11	2	10%	3	5	0	0%
Mayonnaise†† (Soybean Oil)	1 tbsp	11	1.5	8%	0	1.5	5	2%
Shortening±	1 tbsp	13	3.5	18%	4	7.5	0	0%
Potato Chips±	Small bag (42.5 g)	11	2	10%	3	5	0	0%
Milk, whole±	1 cup	7	4.5	23%	0	4.5	35	12%
Doughnut±	1	18	4.5	23%	5	9.5	25	8%
Cookies± (Cream Filled)	3 (30 g)	6	1	5%	2	3	0	0%
Candy Bar±	1 (40 g)	10	4	20%	3	7	<5	1%
Cake, pound±	1 slice (80 g)	16	3.5	18%	4.5	8	0	0%

Omega 3's and 6's – The New Kids on the Block

Polyunsaturated fats: Omega fatty acids are just recently getting their time in the spotlight, and with good reason. Some of their outstanding benefits include:

- Improve skin and hair, and aids eczema and psoriasis
- Thins blood, so decrease in blood clotting
- Decreases blood pressure
- Regulates immune system
- Decreases depression and neurological disorders
- Decreases cholesterol and blood triglycerides (blood fat that increases risk of heart disease),
- Produce *prostaglandins 1* and *3*, shown to **destroy breast, prostate and lung cancer cells.**
- Needed for normal development of brain function and learning (use in ADHD therapy)
- **Decreases inflammation** (important for athletes and non-athletes alike).
- **Helps us to burn fat!**

The best sources of Omega's include:

- **Fish:** (also rich in EPA, a healthy oil, found in high amounts in wild salmon). Sources include wild salmon, tuna, swordfish, sardines, mackerel, anchovies, herring, bass, trout
- **Flax oil** and seeds
- **hemp oil** and seeds
- **other sources** – grape seed oil, walnuts, soybeans, organic corn
- **be wary of the 'S'- oils** – sunflower, sesame and safflower, - as we often over consume them, throwing the delicate balance of Omega 3's to 6's off. They're also often genetically modified.
- **Try Udo's Oil**, a remarkable blend of nuts and seeds, and great in salad dressings.

Save Your Brain: Fish oil is particularly important, given our high rates of **Alzheimer's** and **Attention Deficit Disorder**, so we should all take **2000-3000** mg a day. If you're an **athlete**, you will want to increase this even more to **4000-6000** mg a day.

Sources of Omega 3's and Omega 6's

It's important you eat only healthy oils and fats. Our society is built on refined, 'dead' oils which create an imbalance in body chemistry through eating an over-abundance of such genetically modified and chemically sprayed oils like cottonseed, corn, and safflower oils.

We need to return to our Omega 3's and 6's (especially 3's) which keep our hormones healthy and balanced in our bodies, aid in fat burning, joint health, arterial and heart health. Fish, flax and hemp are the best sources, so if you don't think you're eating enough of these in whole form, you can supplement with 2000-4000 mg/day (check your local health food store for reputable brands).

Dietary sources of EFAs

Food	Omega-3 (grams per 100g)	Omega-6 (grams per 100g)
Flax	20.3	4.9
Hemp seeds	7.0	21.0
Pumpkin seeds	3.2	23.4
Salmon	3.2	0.7
Walnuts	3.0	30.6
Rape seed	2.1	9.0
Herring	2.0	0.4
Soybeans	1.2	8.6
Butter	1.2	1.8
Olive oil	0.6	7.9
Wheat germ	0.5	5.5
Sunflower seeds	0	30.7
Almond	0	9.2
Olives	0	1.6

The Oreo Cookie Story! – The BAD Fats

~ Or when a label's not a label ~

What are *Trans* Fats?

Basically, *trans* fats are made when manufacturers add hydrogen to vegetable oil--a process called hydrogenation. Hydrogenation increases the shelf life and flavor stability of foods containing these fats.

Where can they be found?

Trans fat can be found in vegetable shortenings, some margarines, crackers, cookies, snack foods, and other foods made with or fried in partially hydrogenated oils. Unlike other fats, the majority of *trans* fat is formed when food manufacturers turn liquid oils into solid fats like shortening and hard margarine. A small amount of *trans* fat is found naturally, primarily in dairy products, some meat, and other animal-based foods.



What are the Dangers?

Trans fat, like saturated fat and dietary cholesterol, raises the LDL cholesterol that increases your risk for heart disease. It is also implicated in altering our DNA. Canadians consume on average 4 to 5 times as much saturated fat as *trans* fat in their diets.

What Can You Do About Saturated Fat, *Trans* Fat, and Cholesterol?

When comparing foods, look at the Nutrition Facts panel, and choose the food with the lower amounts of saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol. Health experts recommend that you keep your intake of saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol as low as possible while consuming a nutritionally adequate diet. However, these experts recognize that eliminating these three components entirely from your diet is not practical because they are unavoidable in ordinary diets.

Can You Find *Trans* Fat on the Food Label?

Yes, but remember, labels can be deceiving. It's legal to show zero *trans* fats on a label if there is less than 2 grams of *trans* fat *in a serving*. For example, one Oreo cookie has 1.8 grams of *trans* fats, but because the manufacturers make a serving size as one cookie, it holds under 2 gms of *trans* fats, but legally they can put 0 *trans* fat on the label.

But who ever eats one Oreo cookie? So, if you eat 5 cookies, you're getting 9 grams of *trans* fats, and you don't even know it. Now that's fancy foot-work on behalf of Health Canada and Mr. Christie!

Remember, if the list of ingredients says **hydrogenated** or **modified** oils, it's a *trans* fat in disguise.

There's Nothing Free about Fat Free!

Unless you have been prescribed a therapeutic diet, fat-free isn't the way to be. Fat is an important and necessary part of a healthy diet.

One of the most important functions of fat is its role in aiding the absorption of fat-soluble Vitamins A, E, D, and K. Without fat, your body can't use these vitamins to unlock their health benefits. And a meal with a bit of fat (and protein) can help you feel full and take your mind off food, ultimately giving you greater control over the amount of calories you eat.

Fat-Free and Low-Calorie: Not the Same

Fat-free foods can be tricky: if you examine the package closely, you will often find that the calorie difference between the fat-free and the original version is very minimal. Why? When manufacturers take away the fat, they add extras like sugar to improve the taste, thereby adding calories. So while you often won't find added sugar, you will find added sodium. So be careful: when you go fat-free, you may not be getting the health bargain you planned, since fat-free foods can still be loaded in calories. Scarfing down an entire bag of fat-free chips can add nearly 500 calories to your day!

Beware the Artificial Sweeteners

When something is fat-free, read the label carefully. Are there a bunch of ingredients you can't pronounce? These are artificial sweeteners and other agents that are there to bolster the taste of the product. Not only do these chemicals add dangerous toxins, studies show that artificial sweeteners help your body to hold onto fat, and cause us to overeat more calories in the long run! As well, they disrupt your intestinal bacteria, the very critters that keep our immune system humming along nicely!

Eating Fat Does Not Make You Fat

It's a simple statement that bears repeating – *eating fat does not make you fat. Eating carbs make you fat!* So if you're looking to lose weight, eat your fat and cut your carbs.

Because you don't need a lot of fat to get the benefits (a healthy diet derives 30% of calories from fat), choose the fats you eat wisely. Even though good fats are heart healthy, it's important to keep an eye on your fat consumption. Olive oil and peanuts (monounsaturated fats), are great additions to your diet, but are very calorie-dense, so make your servings small. And try different oils - avocado, grapeseed, canola or walnut oils are nice additions to your meals.

You Need Fat to Burn Fat

Eating fat helps your body to lose fat. If you withhold fat, so too will your body – it will withhold its own fat stores and not let them be burned off for fuel. You need to 'coax' your body into burning fat, so exercise and high quality fats are the answer. No saturated fats or trans-fats here! So cut back on the fatty meats (saturated fats) and refined products (trans fats), and load up on the good stuff.

Fats - Top 10 Tips



Summary

- 1) The best kinds of fats are monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, which are liquid at room temperature – avocado, olives, nuts, fish and flax.
- 2) You need good fats to burn fat!
- 3) A label is not a label – just because it says 0 trans fats, it may still contain trans fats, so read labels!
- 4) Trans fats are also called *hydrogenated* and *modified* on food labels.
- 5) Animal meat is not necessarily a high source of saturated (unhealthy fats) – if they're commercial meats, they're likely high in saturated fats. If they're traditional / wild / local, they typically have very low levels of saturated fats.
- 6) The best kinds of fats are Omega 3's and 6's, which come predominately from fish, flax or hemp.
- 7) Low-fat foods are often high in added sugars.
- 8) Fish oil is superior brain food, so supplement with 2000-3000 mg per day.
- 9) Using flax oil or Udo's oil is an excellent addition to any diet, as they balance hormones, aid recovery, lower cholesterol and blood pressure, maintain healthy joints and reduce muscle aches and pains.
- 10) Going no-fat will cause your own body to hoard fat!

Remember: Make fats 25% of your total caloric intake each day. If it's the healthy kind, it will help you to balance out your body, and increase immunity and overall health while helping you to lose weight!