



Fats: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly



Fat is an important nutrient for your health. It plays many different roles in your body:

- It gives you energy (also called calories).
- It helps your body absorb vitamins A, D, E and K.
- It helps your body grow and develop.

The type and amount of fat you eat are important. You need some fat in your diet, but too much can be bad for your health. Also, some types of fat (saturated and trans fats) may increase your risk of developing heart disease and should be limited.

The good: unsaturated fats

Unsaturated fat is a type of fat found in the foods you eat. Replacing saturated and trans fats with unsaturated fats has been shown to help lower cholesterol levels and reduce the risk of heart disease. Choose foods with unsaturated fat as part of a balanced diet using “Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide”.

Even though it is a good fat, having too much unsaturated fat may lead to having too many calories. This may cause weight gain and increase your risk of developing obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and certain types of cancer.

The bad: saturated fats

Saturated fat is a type of fat found in food. It has been shown to raise LDL-cholesterol (bad cholesterol) levels. Having high LDL-cholesterol levels increases your risk for heart disease.

Saturated fat is found in many foods: meat, coconut, palm and palm kernel oils, dairy products (like butter, cheese and whole milk), lard and shortening. Choosing lower-fat meat and dairy products can help reduce the amount of saturated fat in your diet. Use vegetable oil or soft margarines that are low in saturated and trans fats instead of butter and hard margarine.

The ugly: trans fats

Trans fat is made from a chemical process known as “partial hydrogenation”. This is when liquid oil is made into a solid fat. Like saturated fat, trans fat has been shown to raise LDL-cholesterol (bad cholesterol) levels, which increases your risk for heart disease. Unlike saturated fat, trans fat also lowers HDL-cholesterol (good cholesterol). A low level of HDL-cholesterol is also a risk factor for heart disease.

Health tips:

- Eat a small amount of unsaturated fats each day: nuts, seeds, fatty fish (mackerel and salmon), and vegetable oils.
- Always look at the Nutrition Facts table to choose and compare foods.
- Choose leaner cuts of meat, skinless chicken and turkey.
- Choose lower-fat dairy products.
- Choose soft margarines that are low in saturated and trans fat.
- Buy fewer pre-packaged foods and “ready-to-eat” meals.
- Buy vegetables, fruit and whole grain products with no added fat.

Source: www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Enjoy the sun safely:

- Apply a generous amount of sunscreen to clean, dry skin at least 20 minutes before you go outside to allow the active ingredients to soak into your skin.
- Apply sunscreen even on cloudy days because UV rays can still pass through thin or scattered layers of cloud.
- Use a sunscreen with an SPF 15 or higher. SPF 15 sunscreen blocks 93% of UVB rays, while SPF 30 and higher sunscreen blocks 97% of UVB rays.
- Sunscreens have an expiry date that is usually visible on the container. Sunscreens contain chemicals and they should not be used after the expiry date because they may not work as well.
- People can use both sunscreen and insect repellent. Health Canada recommends that if you apply both products, put the sunscreen on first, followed by the insect repellent.
- Talk to your pharmacist if you need help choosing a sunscreen.



Source: www.cancer.ca