

# Fat Facts

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Canada's Food Guide encourages people to choose lower fat options to reduce the total amount of fat in their diet and reduce the amount of saturated and trans fats they consume. \*\*

## Why should I be concerned about fat?

Eating too much fat, especially saturated and trans fat, can raise blood cholesterol levels. Over time, this can lead to an increased risk of heart disease. And, because fat contains twice as much energy as protein or carbohydrates, eating less fat can help people to achieve or maintain a healthy weight.

## How much fat should I eat?

Include a small amount - 30 to 45 mL (2-3 Tbsp) - of unsaturated fat each day. This includes oil used for cooking, salad dressings, margarine and mayonnaise.

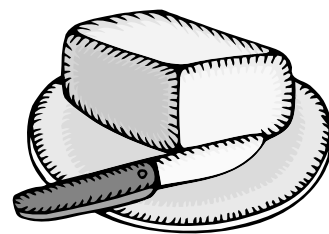
## What types of fat should I use?

The type of fat you get in foods affects your health. Choose foods containing mostly unsaturated fats (polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats). These foods supply omega-3 fats and omega-6 fats to protect against heart disease. You should try to limit the amount of saturated and trans fat that you eat. You can find the total amount of fat and the amount of saturated and trans fats in food by looking at the Nutrition Facts table on the packaging.

## Which is better - butter or margarine?

While they both contain the same amount of fat, they contain different types. Margarines that are non-hydrogenated contain more

monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats which are healthier for you. Look for a soft margarine that has 2 grams or less of saturated and trans fats combined in the Nutrition Facts table. Butter, hard margarine, lard and shortening contain mostly saturated fat and should be limited.



## Should I cut out high - cholesterol foods?

Eating high-cholesterol foods, like eggs, liver, and shrimp, has only a small effect on blood cholesterol level. Most people can enjoy these foods in moderation. Reducing the total amount of fat in your diet, especially the saturated fat and trans fat, is more likely to have an impact on your health than simply avoiding high-cholesterol foods.

## How can I choose lower fat products at the grocery store?

Choosing more vegetables, fruit, breads, cereals, grains, and legumes, such as lentils and beans, is a good start. These foods are naturally low in fat. Shop for fish, shellfish, poultry and lean meat. Compare the labels on milk products and buy those with the lower fat content (% M.F.). For example, use skim or 1% milk and cheese that contains less than 20% M.F. Use the *Nutrition Facts* on the product label to choose foods that have less fat.

## What about low-fat, fat-free, cholesterol-free, and "light" foods?

Don't be fooled into thinking that you can eat all you want of a food just because it's low in fat or fat-free. Remember that other food components - starch, sugar, and protein - also contribute to a food's energy value, or calories. Foods labelled "cholesterol-free" don't contain cholesterol but can still be high in fat. Also, the term "light" doesn't necessarily refer to fat. It can also mean a food is "lighter" in colour, flavour, texture, or salt content, so be sure to read the label.

## Do I have to change the way I cook?

Canada's Food Guide recommends that people prepare foods with little or no added fat. When cooking, try roasting, grilling, baking, stir-frying, steaming or poaching.

Learn to flavour foods with herbs, spices, and other fat-free flavorings, like garlic, lemon juice, and vinegar. Experiment with reducing the fat in your favourite recipes, or try a new recipe from one of the many low-fat cookbooks available. When you do prepare a favourite high-fat food, remember to have a smaller portion and balance this with lower-fat choices throughout the day.

## Should children follow a low fat diet?

No, young children have small appetites and need fat calories for growth and development. Do not restrict nutritious foods because of their fat content. Offer a variety of foods from the four food groups.

<b>Here is a quick guide to the main types of fat and what foods they can be found in.</b>	
<b>Fat</b>	<b>Food sources</b>
<b>Saturated</b>	Fatty meats, higher fat milk products, butter, lard, shortening, hard margarines, coconut and palm oil.
<b>Polyunsaturated</b>	Corn, safflower, sunflower, soybean, and flaxseed oils.
<b>Monounsaturated</b>	Canola, olive, soybean and peanut oils, many types of nuts.
<b>Trans</b>	Deep-fried foods, fast foods, salty snacks, and baked goods made with shortening or partially hydrogenated vegetable oils .
<b>Omega-3</b>	Fish, especially salmon, tuna, and herring, fish oils.
<b>Cholesterol</b>	Found only in foods of animal origin, such as meat, eggs, and dairy products. Also made by our bodies.

\*\* Canada's Food Guide. Available at [www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide), or call 1-866-225-0709.

