



# How to Choose Healthiest Fats or Oils?



We often find it hard to select from several varieties of oil at the grocery store and find it hard to choose the right kind of oil. Although everyone needs fat for the health, we want most of our fats to come from healthy sources. Good fat gives energy, required for healthy skin, and absorption of certain nutrients. But we need to be aware of the type of fat we are consuming as well as the amount we are consuming. Both, healthy and unhealthy fats, contains the same amount of calories and excess of them are harmful to health.

Some tips which can be helpful in making the smart choices while selecting oils/fats.

**There are three main kinds of fats in our diet:**

## Good fat-Unsaturated fat

They should come from plants and fish and should be liquid at room temperature, examples are vegetable oils. Being a liquid, it can flow through arteries and veins easily, it will not stick in them and will not cause a heart disease. Good fats provide omega 3 fatty acids that body needs, also helps in lowering bad cholesterol LDL and hence reduces the risk of the heart diseases. Grate for the heart.



### **Examples of good fat/oil are:**

**Canola oil**– American heart association recommends it, contains a good amount of Omega -3 fatty acids and is economical also. The most common oil used for processing and household use.

**Olive oil** – Contains the most monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFA), a healthy fat of all and also contains omega-3. It is flavorful but expensive and used for cooking, dressing, and frying.

**The terms virgin and extra virgin olive oil refer to the acid content of the oil, not its nutrient content.**

**Virgin olive oil:** These are unrefined oil which means chemical or heat is not used to extract it from fruit which contributes to higher cost. Not common at grocery stores.

**Extra-virgin olive oil:** These are the highest-quality unrefined oil and is not treated with chemicals or altered by temperature. Food can be cooked with olive oil at low heat and is unsuitable for cooking as it has a lower smoke point than most of the oils, which means it burns at a lower temperature. It's best for dressing, dips, cold dishes.

**Light olive oil:** "Light" means the color and fragrance, not calories, fat content or flavor.

These are refined oil that can be used for cooking, baking, sautéing, grilling and frying

**Pure olive oil:** These are a lower-quality oil than extra-virgin or virgin olive oil, with a lighter color, more neutral flavor. This type of olive oil is an all-purpose cooking oil.

**Peanut oil:** They contains MUFA a healthy fat. Popular for frying as it gives a good flavor to fried food even though it is slightly costly.

**Refined safflower and sunflower:** They contain high levels of PUFA fats and is a good all-purpose oil for cooking, frying, for salads etc.

**Mustard oil:** Mustard oil is not allowed to be imported or sold in the U.S. and Canada for use in cooking, due to its high erucic acid content. Erucic acid appears to have toxic effects on the heart at high enough doses.

**Other good sources of invisible fat that are hidden within the food and most often we don't consider them as fat are:**

**Fatty fish:** Mackerel, salmon, trout, white fish, tuna, and herring. Rich source of omega-3 but sometimes contaminated with mercury so pregnant women and young children should be careful before consuming.

**Avocados** are the good source of heart-healthy omega-3.

**Nuts** especially almonds, walnuts, pistachio. Contains healthy Omega-3.

**Seeds** such as flax seeds, chia seeds not only contain good fat but also a fair source of fiber and antioxidants. Can make nutritious yogurt and smoothies

**TIP:** Include more omega-3 from natural sources. Supplements may not give the same health benefit.

### Bad fat -Saturated fat

They come from animal and are solid at room temperatures like butter or any kind of animal fat such as skin on a chicken etc. It's a more solid fat and these are the one that can stick in the arteries or in the vein and its bad for the heart. Raise LDL or bad cholesterol and increases the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Most often saturated fat comes from animal sources which are also important sources of protein. Protein is important for energy, satiety building muscles, fighting infections. So, it's very important to make smart choices to enjoy the benefit of protein while avoiding unhealthy fats. Saturated fats can be avoided or reduced by choosing lean cuts of meat or poultry, fish, non-meat options such as beans, legumes, millets, soya, seeds, and nuts etc.



### **Some Examples Are:**

**Animal fats-** beef, pork, poultry with skin, bacon, organ meats like kidney, liver etc.

**Spreads:** Butter, lard, tallow, mayonnaise.

**Whole milk & its products:** cream, cheese

**Palm oil:** Due to a high level of saturated fat in it, is solid at room temperature. It is a cheap substitute for butter or Trans fats where solid fat is desirable, such as the making of pastry dough and baked goods. Though palm oil is a better replacement for trans-fats but not a healthy replacement. Not a good substitute for Trans fats for individuals with already-elevated LDL levels

**Coconut oil:** It is highly saturated and solid just slightly below room temp, it is used in confections. Excellent for frying as it is stable and has a long shelf life. It is inexpensive, and becomes rancid easily, Similar to palm kernel. Being saturated oil can increase the risk of heart disease.

**Ghee:** It is also called as desi ghee, common in Indian subcontinents. It is a clarified butter composed almost entirely of fat, 62% of which consists of saturated fats. The nutrition facts label found on bottled cow's ghee produced in the United States indicates 8 mg of cholesterol per teaspoon.

### **Ugly/Worst – Trans-fat**

These are the worst kind of fats where certain types of oils or fats are processed chemically that make them unhealthy. Trans-fat can be found under the food. Ex pie shells, baked good, shortening. Excessive intake of Trans fatty acids are not healthful, but zero is also not realistic in today's world. Though there is no relationship between

obesity and Trans fats, there is a relationship to heart disease. Trans fats are not only responsible for raising the LDL, but also reducing good HDL cholesterol. It's a risk factor for heart disease and stroke. It's important to look for these as they are shown to be detrimental to the heart.

Looking at the ingredient list of the packet is the only way to find out that it has trans-fat. It would mention as hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated fat in the ingredient list. It's also imp to know that **even it says 0 grams of trans fat, on the nutrition facts, it's important to look at ingredient list, because it could still be there just the serving size lacks trans-fat** but if you eat more than the serving size say in a case of cupcake where one cupcake is the serving size but if you eat two, you may actually be consuming trans-fat. These are all gimmicks in the food industry, manufacturers take advantage of this as consumers find it hard to understand nutrition fact panel.



**Examples are:**

**Baked goods**-cookies, pastries, pies, crackers.

**Snack food**- Potato chips, microwave popcorn

**Ready-to-use** frostings, margarine, shortening,

**Refrigerated dough products**- biscuits, cinnamon rolls, and frozen pizza.

**Fried foods**- French fries, fried chicken, and doughnuts

**Vegetable shortening**- Stick margarine, Coffee Creamer, Crisco etc.

**Vanaspati ghee-** It is a fully or partially hydrogenated vegetable cooking oil, often used as a cheaper substitute for ghee and butter. In India, Vanaspati ghee is usually made from palm oil. It's very high in trans-fat.

***Tran's fat can be found in many of the same foods as saturated fat.***

Good fats- Unsaturated	Bad fats- Saturated Fats	Ugly fat – Trans Fat
Vegetable oils -Canola, olive, sunflower, safflower	Animal fats- beef, pork, poultry with skin	Baked goods-cookies, pastries, pies, crackers.
Fish – salmon, herring	Butter, lard, tallow, mayonnaise.	Snack food- Potato chips, microwave popcorn.
Avocados	Whole milk, cream & cheese	Ready-to-use frostings
Nuts – almonds, walnuts, pistachio	Baked good	Vegetable shortening  <input type="checkbox"/> Stick margarine  <input type="checkbox"/> Coffee Creamer
Seeds – flaxseeds, chia seeds	Coconut oil, palm oil	Refrigerated dough products- biscuits, cinnamon rolls, and frozen pizza
		Fried foods- French fries, fried chicken, and doughnuts

**F.D.A** sets 2018 deadline to eliminate artery-clogging partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs), the primary dietary source of artificial trans-fat in processed foods, must be removed from all food products in the United States.

### **Summary:**

Unsaturated, fats are the good fats and these are the fats to be used as the primary source of fat. It needs to be consumed in moderation as calories are same in all fats. Cook food more by grilling, roasting, sautéing, steaming, and less by deep frying. Choose lean cuts of meat, careful with baked goods and always read labels.

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**TIP:** LDL and HDL types of cholesterol- LDL is bad cholesterol and HDL is good. **HDL** starts with **H** which means **H**ealthy, keep it **h**igh. **LDL** is bad, keep it **L**ow