

# FATS

TOMLINSON LIFESTYLE MEDICINE CONSULTING



Fat is the body's major energy storage system. When the energy from foods we eat and drink cannot be used in your body, the body may turn it into fat for later use. Your body uses fat from foods for energy, to cushion organs and bones, and to make hormones and regulate blood pressure. Some fat is also necessary to maintain healthy skin, hair and nails, so you should not cut all fat out of your diet.

There are different types of fats, with some fats being healthier than others. To help make sure you stay healthy, it is important to eat unsaturated fats in small amounts as part of a balanced diet. When eaten in large amounts, all fats, including healthy fats, can contribute to weight gain. Fat is higher in energy than any other nutrient and so eating less fat overall is likely to help with weight loss. In general, most people consume too much fat, which could lead to heart disease, overweight, obesity, diabetes and many other health problems.

## Types of Fats

Saturated fat - can raise the bad Low-density lipoproteins (LDL) cholesterol, a chemical substance found in all animal fat. This extra cholesterol causes the arteries to clog and thus increases the risk for a heart attack, a stroke, or poor circulation.

Animal fats from eggs, dairy products, and meats are very high in saturated fats. Other foods that are high in saturated include peanut butter, hard margarines, lard, coconut oil, ghee or clarified butter, vegetable ghee and palm oil, creams, gravies, bacon, and sausage.

Limit your use of foods with saturated fats in your diet as a high intake of can be unhealthy. Read ingredient labels carefully. Saturated fats are easily identified because these fats are solid at room temperature.

Monounsaturated fats - these types of fats are shown to improve blood cholesterol levels.

Monounsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature. Monounsaturated fats are found in olive oil, canola oil, peanut oil, non-hydrogenated margarine, avocados and some nuts that include almonds, pistachios, cashews, pecans and hazelnuts.



Monounsaturated fats have been shown to raise the level of High-density lipoproteins (HDL), the 'good cholesterol that protects against heart attacks, in the blood, so in moderation they can be part of a healthy diet.

Polyunsaturated fats - these types of fats can lower cholesterol levels (LDL cholesterol). They are liquid at room temperature.

A type of essential polyunsaturated fat is omega-3. Omega-3 fats cannot be manufactured by the body.

Omega-3 fatty acids comes from food. Studies suggest that a diet that is rich in omega 3 fatty acids could help to prevent clotting of blood, reducing your risk of stroke and also help to lower your triglycerides, a type of blood fat linked to heart disease.

The best sources of omega-3 fat are cold-water fish such as mackerel, sardines, herring, and salmon, as well as canola and soybean oils, omega-3 eggs, flaxseed, walnuts, pecans and pine nuts. Patients who are taking more than 3 grams of omega-3 fatty acids from capsules should do so only under a physician's care as a high intake is found to could cause excessive bleeding in some people.

Cholesterol - your body produces all the cholesterol you need. Cholesterol has many important functions in the body but having high levels of the wrong type of cholesterol in the blood increases heart disease risk.

Cholesterol is found only in foods that come from animals. Foods that are very high in cholesterol include egg yolks, and organ meats, such as liver, and kidney. It was once thought that eating too many cholesterol-containing foods (such as eggs) was the major dietary cause of high blood cholesterol level.

But we now know that eating too many foods containing higher amounts of saturated and trans fats is a bigger problem and has a much greater influence on blood cholesterol levels.



*It has been suggested by health professionals to limit the products that list “vegetable oil shortening” or “partially hydrogenated” oil in the ingredients.*

Trans fats - similar to saturated fats, trans fat raises cholesterol levels (the bad LDL).

Trans fat is found in partially hydrogenated margarines, deep-fried foods from fast-food restaurants and many packaged crackers, cookies and commercially baked products. Consuming a diet that is high in trans fat is very bad for your health. This is because trans fatty foods could significantly increase your risk of developing cardiovascular diseases, coronary heart disease and other diseases.

Artificial trans fats are banned from Canada's food supply. The ban specifically prohibits adding partially hydrogenated oils, or PHO's, to packaged foods and foods sold in restaurants.