



The Facts on Fat

Fat tends to get a bad rap, but in reality it is an important and essential nutrient for humans. Fat plays a role in nerve and brain health, and provides us with essential vitamins and fatty acids. Health Canada recommends that fat make up 25-35% of our daily caloric intake. This means that for a moderately active person consuming 2500 kcal/day, 625-875 kcal/day should be coming from fat. When it comes to fat, it's not only the amount that matters, but also the **type** of fat you are consuming.

All fats are not created equal—focus on consuming sources of unsaturated fats, both monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. These fats can have a positive impact on blood lipid levels and cardiovascular health. Try to limit intake of saturated fats and completely avoid sources of trans fat. These fats can have a negative impact on blood lipid levels and overall cardiovascular health.

The GOOD

Unsaturated fats are part of a healthy diet. Consuming unsaturated fats can supply your body with essential fatty acids. These fats tend to be liquid at room temperature and solid when chilled. There are two types of unsaturated fats: monounsaturated fats (MUFAs) and polyunsaturated fats (PUFAs), these differ in structure but both have health benefits when replacing saturated and trans fats in the diet. Within PUFAs there are several different fatty acids that are important for health: omega-3 & 6 are essential fatty acids, meaning our bodies cannot produce them. Most sources of polyunsaturated fats contain both omega-3 and omega-6 in differing ratios. Omega-3 fatty acids are particularly important for those with high triglycerides.

Monounsaturated fat

Sources: olive oil, canola oil, non-hydrogenated margarine, peanut butter, avocados, nuts & seeds.

Recommendation: 15-20% of daily caloric intake (375 kcal-500 kcal/day for a 2500 kcal/day diet)

Polyunsaturated fat

Recommendation: 6-11% of daily caloric intake (150 kcal-275 kcal/day for a 2500 kcal/day diet)

Sources: soybean oil, sunflower seed oil, walnuts, tofu, sunflower seeds, wheat germ

Omega-3 fatty acids

Recommendation: 1.6 g/day for men & 1.1 g/day for women

Sources: salmon, trout, walnuts, pumpkin seed, fortified products: eggs, milk, margarine, yogurt



The BAD

Saturated fats can raise LDL levels. Saturated fats tend to be solid at room temperature and are only found in animal products and tropical oils.

Sources: milk, butter, ghee, cheese, beef, lamb, poultry with skin, palm oil, coconut oil

Recommendations: should make up no more than 10% of total energy intake

The UGLY

Trans Fats come in two types, those that are naturally occurring in food and those that are created during manufacturing. The major contributor of trans fats in the Westernized diet are these artificial trans fats. When reading food labels, avoid foods with the ingredient “partially hydrogenated oils”—these are the trans fats manufactured and added to foods.

Sources: baked goods, chocolate bars, frozen pizzas, fried foods, crackers, stick margarine

Recommendations: should make up no more than 1% of total energy intake

Type of Fat	LDL-C	HDL-C	TGs
Monounsaturated fat	↓	—	—
Polyunsaturated fats	↓	— *	—
Omega-3	—	—	↓
Saturated fat	↑	—	↑
Trans fat	↑	↓	—

* When consumed in the recommended amounts. Consuming too much PUFA is thought to lower HDL-C.



Checklist to improve your fat intake:

Consume fish as a source of protein at dinner at least once per week. Try to choose fatty fish like salmon or trout as these are high in that TG lowering, essential fatty acid omega-3 .
Cook with oils like canola oil, safflower oil, and extra virgin olive oil rather than lard, butter or coconut oil.
Prepare foods with less oil—use 1 spray of non-stick cooking spray, cook with a non-stick frying pan, or steam, poach or broil food.
When consuming meat, remove all visible fat and skin.
Choose lean cuts of meat: poultry without skin; flank steaks, sirloin, or top loin when having beef and tenderloin or chops when having pork. When cooking with ground meat choose ground turkey, chicken or ground beef that is at least 90% lean.
Choose low-fat dairy products: skim, 1%, 2% or non-dairy milk, cheese below 20% milk fat (M.F.) and yogurt below 2% M.F.
Read food labels and avoid items with “partially hydrogenated oil”.
Consume a plant-based protein , like chickpeas or lentils as your source of protein at dinner at least once per week. These will provide fibre and protein, without the saturated fat.