

# Saturated and *Trans* Fats

## What Does Fat Do?

Fat is one of the three main building blocks of food, along with carbohydrate and protein. You need some fat in your diet—but not too much.

- Your body uses fat from food to make new tissues and cells. Fat also helps you absorb certain vitamins in food.
- Fat has more calories than carbohydrates or protein (1 gram fat = 9 calories; 1 gram protein or carbohydrate = 4 calories).

## What Types of Fats Are in Food?

- **Saturated fats** and ***trans* fats** are unhealthy fats. They increase cholesterol and triglyceride levels in the blood. This puts you at greater risk of heart attack or stroke. **Limit** these unhealthy fats.
- **Unsaturated fats** are healthy fats. They do not increase cholesterol or triglyceride levels. Some types, such as omega-3 fats, may actually lower your triglycerides. **Choose** these fats instead of the unhealthy types.

## Which Foods Have Saturated Fats?

Saturated fats are mostly found in high-fat animal foods, such as fatty or greasy cuts of meat, poultry skin, whole milk, cream, regular cheese, butter, and lard.

## Which Foods Have *Trans* Fats?

- Foods made with **partially hydrogenated oil** contains *trans* fats. (Hydrogenating oil helps extend the shelf life of packaged foods.) Check the ingredients list on the food label for this type of oil.
- *Trans* fats are often found in store-bought cookies, cakes, chips, and crackers. Many types of margarine also have *trans* fats.

## How Much Is Too Much?

- Most healthy adults should limit the amount of saturated fat they eat to less than 10% of their total daily calories. For example, if you eat 1,800 calories each day, you should eat less than 20 grams of saturated fat per day.
- If you have high cholesterol or other risk factors for heart disease, limit your saturated fat to less than 7% of your daily calories. For a person eating 1,800 calories per day, the limit is 14 grams of saturated fat.
- Avoid *trans* fats as much as possible. Ideally, you should eat no *trans* fats.



## Tips for Eating Less Saturated Fats and *Trans* Fats

- Use nonstick pans or cooking sprays instead of butter, margarine, or lard.
- Replace half of the fat in baked goods with applesauce or low-fat yogurt.
- Trim visible fat from meat. Remove skin from chicken or turkey.
- After browning ground meat, drain off the grease and throw it away.
- Plan at least two meatless dinners per week.
- Try the substitutions shown in the following chart.

Avoid ...	Choose instead ...
75% lean ground beef (75% lean means it is 25% fat)	> 90% lean ground beef or ground skinless chicken or turkey breast
Marbled, high-fat meats (such as prime cuts)	Leaner cuts: round, loin, sirloin, or chuck
Pork bacon	Low-fat bacon, turkey bacon, ham, or Canadian bacon
Fried chicken	Skinless chicken
Beef or pork hot dogs, Polish sausage, bratwurst	Low-fat hot dogs, turkey franks, tofu- or soy-based franks
Pizza with pepperoni, sausage, or extra cheese	Pizza with Canadian bacon, low-fat ground beef, or vegetables
Sandwiches with bologna, salami, pastrami, or corned beef	Sandwiches with turkey, chicken, boiled ham, lean roast beef, peanut butter, or other nut butters
Regular mayonnaise	Reduced-fat mayonnaise or mustard
Whole milk, 2% milk, whole chocolate milk	Fat-free (skim) or 1% milk; reduced-fat chocolate milk
Whole milk yogurt or sour cream	Fat-free or reduced-fat yogurt; low-fat sour cream
Regular cheese	Fat-free or reduced-fat cheese
Pasta with alfredo or cream sauce	Pasta with marinara sauce
Butter, stick margarine, lard, shortening	Plant stanol spreads, yogurt-based spreads, reduced-fat soft or liquid margarines
Cream in cooking	Low-fat milk or yogurt
Cream-based salad dressings	Reduced-fat salad dressings; vinegar and oil dressings
Tartar sauce	Lemon juice
Packaged cookies, cakes, and crackers	Low-fat snacks; homemade baked goods made with oils instead of butter or margarine