

Fat Facts

Many people think that fat is bad, but did you know that your body actually needs fat; just not as much as most people eat. Fats are important to give your body energy for cells to grow, protecting your organs and help keeping your body warm.

The major types of fats in foods are saturated fats, *trans* fats (the “bad” fats), monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats (the better fats). Each fat has different characteristics and different effects on your health.

	BAD FATS		BETTER FATS	
	Saturated Fats	Trans Fats	Monounsaturated Fats	Polyunsaturated Fats
Commonly Found in These Foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Mainly from animals) beef, lamb, pork, poultry with the skin, beef fat, lard, cream, butter, cheese, other whole- or reduced-fat dairy products • (Some from plants) Palm, palm kernel and coconut oils • Some baked goods, snack foods and fried foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baked goods - pastries, biscuits, muffins, cakes, pie crusts, doughnuts and cookies • Fried foods – French fries, fried chicken, breaded chicken nuggets and breaded fish • Snack foods – popcorn, crackers. • Traditional stick margarine and vegetable shortening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetable oils – olive, canola and peanut • Avocados • Many nuts and seeds - almonds and peanuts/peanut butter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High in Omega-6 Vegetable oils – soybean, corn and safflower • Many nuts and seeds – walnuts and sunflower seeds • High in Omega-3 (EPA and DHA) Fatty fish – salmon, tuna, mackerel, herring and trout
Effect on Heart Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise LDL “bad” cholesterol level • Foods high in saturated fats may also be high in cholesterol • Increase risk of heart disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise LDL “bad” cholesterol • May lower HDL “good” cholesterol • Increase risk of heart disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce LDL “bad” cholesterol • May lower risk of heart disease 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce LDL “bad” cholesterol • May lower risk of heart disease
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon atoms saturated with hydrogen atoms • Solid at room temperature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created in an industrial process by adding hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils • Solid at room temperature • Contained in “Partially hydrogenated oils” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have one double-bonded (unsaturated) carbon • Liquid at room temperature, but turn solid when chilled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than one double-bonded (unsaturated) carbon • Liquid at room temperature and when chilled
Daily Limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 7% of total daily calories • If you eat 2,000 calories a day, less than 140 calories (15 grams) can be from saturated fats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 1% of total daily calories • If you eat 2,000 calories a day, less than 20 calories (2 grams) can be from <i>trans</i> fats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total fats should be about 25% to 35% of total daily calories • Eat foods with monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats instead of saturated or <i>trans</i> fats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total fats should be about 25% to 35% of total daily calories • Eat foods with monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats instead of saturated or <i>trans</i> fats

For more information on heart-healthy eating visit www.Heart.org/Nutrition or contact the American Heart Association at inquiries@heart.org or (800) 242-8721.