

## Why should I know about fats in food?

Fat is found in many foods and is a source of energy. Fat has a lot of calories, but helps your body absorb some nutrients, such as some vitamins. Fat also gives food flavor and will help you feel full after a meal. Some fats are better for your heart than others. Unhealthy fats, such as *many saturated fats (SFA)* and *trans fat*, can raise your “bad” LDL-cholesterol and increase your risk for heart disease. Healthier fats are *monounsaturated (MUFA)* and *polyunsaturated (PUFA)* fats. Using these fats in place of SFA can lower your “bad” LDL-cholesterol and lower your risk of heart disease.

## How to Find Healthy and Unhealthy Fats in Food

### Using the Nutrition Facts Label

Read the food label to see the grams of all fats in a serving. All high-fat foods have a mix of fats. *Healthier* foods are higher in MUFA and PUFA. *Less healthy* foods are higher in SFA and may have *trans fat*. Choose foods that have more MUFA and PUFA and less SFA. Avoid foods with *trans fat*—found as *partially hydrogenated oil* in the ingredient list. The **daily SFA limit for heart-healthy eating is less than 7% of your total daily calories**. For energy needs of 1,600 calories per day, the saturated fat limit is about 12 grams. High-fat foods can be high in calories. Be aware of your portion sizes to keep your calorie intake at goal and avoid weight gain.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 Tbsp (15mL)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 120	Fat Cal. 120
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 14g	21%
Saturated Fat 2g	9%
Trans Fat 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 1.5g	
Monounsaturated Fat 10g	

### Examples of Foods with Healthy Fats and Unhealthy Fats

Foods rich in **healthy fats** are avocados, fatty fish like salmon, many kinds of raw and unsalted nuts and nut butters like peanut and almond butters, seeds such as flax and pumpkin seeds, and *liquid* vegetable oils like canola, corn, olive, peanut, safflower, sesame, soybean, and sunflower oil.



Foods rich in **unhealthy fats** are fatty and processed meats like bacon, sausage, salami, and hotdogs, some dairy foods like full-fat cheese, whole milk, and cream, *solid* fats like butter, lard, coconut, and palm oils, foods with *partially hydrogenated* oils, and deep fried foods like donuts, fried fish, and French fries.

### Tips for Choosing Healthy Fats in Meals and Snacks

Choose whole-grain toast topped with 2 TBSP avocado or almond butter instead of donuts or pastries

Use skim or 1% milk, low-fat yogurt, or soymilk with no added sugar

At lunch, add avocado to sandwiches and salads instead of cheese

Add skinless poultry or fatty fish like salmon and tuna to a mixed green salad

Grill fish or skinless chicken for dinner more often than steak or pork

Choose lean-cuts of red meat like “round” or “loin” with all visible fat trimmed OR lean ground meats

Prepare lean meats by baking, broiling, grilling, or sautéing in 1 TBSP liquid vegetable oil

Snack on 1 oz. raw or unsalted nuts or seeds, low-fat yogurt with fresh fruit, or hummus and raw veggies

**A registered dietitian nutritionist can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle, and support you in your journey to a healthful dietary pattern.**