



Why should I know about fats in food?

Many foods have fat. Fat has a lot of calories, but it helps your body in many ways. It helps your body absorb some nutrients. Fat also gives food flavor and helps you feel full. Some fats are better for your heart than others. Unhealthy fats, such as *many saturated fats* and *trans fat*, can raise your LDL-C. This can increase your risk for heart disease. Healthier fats are *monounsaturated* and *polyunsaturated* fats. Using these fats in place of saturated fats can lower your LDL-C. This can lower your risk of heart disease.

Examples of Food with Healthy Fats and Unhealthy Fats

Foods with healthy fats



- Avocados
- Fatty fish like salmon
- Raw and unsalted nuts
- Almond butter and peanut butter
- Seeds like flax and pumpkin seeds
- *Liquid* oils like canola, corn, olive, peanut, safflower, sesame, soybean, and sunflower oil

Foods with unhealthy fats



- Fatty and processed meats like hamburger, bacon, sausage, salami, bologna, and hotdogs
- Full-fat dairy foods like whole milk, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, sour cream, and cream
- *Solid* fats like butter, lard, coconut, and palm oils
- Foods with partially hydrogenated oil

Using the Nutrition Facts Label

Read the food label to see the grams of all fats in a serving. All foods high in fat 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 1,600 calories per day, the SFA 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	

How to Find Healthy and Unhealthy Fats in Food

Tips for Choosing Healthy Fats in Meals and Snacks

Breakfast: Choose whole-grain toast with ¼ avocado or 2 TBSP almond butter • Try Greek low-fat yogurt with mixed berries • Drink skim or 1% milk or soymilk with no added sugar

Lunch: Add ¼ avocado to sandwiches and salads instead of cheese • Add skinless chicken or fatty fish like salmon and tuna to a mixed green salad

Dinner: Grill fish or skinless chicken more often than steak or pork • Choose lean red meat like “round” or “loin” • Choose lean ground meats

Snacks: 1 oz. raw or unsalted nuts or seeds • Low-fat yogurt with fresh fruit • 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 nutrition journey.