



Looking at fat *Differently!*

The days of fat being looked at as one nutrient that we should either eat more or less of are long gone. We now know that different types of fats have different roles in our health, and should be given different priorities in our diets.

What are the different types of fats?



Foods containing fat are made up of a mix of different fatty acid compounds, which are categorized by their structure. This structure impacts the way fats perform in food, cooking, and their role in health and disease risks. Saturated Fatty Acids (SFA), are highest in animal fats and tropical oils. Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids (PUFA) include the omega-3s found in fish, nuts and seeds, and omega-6s found in meats and some vegetable oils. Monounsaturated fatty acids (MUFA) are found in nuts, olive and canola oils and avocado. Trans fatty acids (TFA) are found both naturally occurring in certain meat and dairy products, and as the result of processing in partially hydrogenated oils.



Which fats should we be eating less or more of?

Our bodies need a blend of fatty acids, but most of us are not getting quite the right blend. According to current recommendations, we should be eating more PUFAs, with a focus on omega-3s, and less SFAs and TFAs.



What does this mean for my plate?

By swapping in better fats for less healthful fats, we can improve our health and keep overall calories in check, which is important because all fats have the same, relatively high amount of calories. Foods to add to our plates include nuts, fish, avocado, canola and olive oil. Foods to move off of our plates include those made with artificial trans fats, such as snacks, desserts or foods fried in partially hydrogenated oils. Foods that should appear on our plates less often, and in smaller portions include high fat meats and dairy products that contain a lot of saturated fat.



REFERENCES:

1. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Dietary Fatty Acids for Healthy Adults. *J Acad Nutr Diet*. 2014;14:136-153. Written by Jennifer M. Igracio, MS, RD.