

FAT FACT SHEET

Fat is possibly one of the most hotly debated nutrients in the human diet, mostly for its history with heart disease. When talking about the different types of dietary fat, it is important to note that the different names for each are based on their chemical structure. Fats are composed of long chains of carbon atoms. The presence of double bonds on this carbon chain indicates what category they fall under. These double bonds also drastically change the physical properties of the fat and its function in your body.

SATURATED FATS

Saturated fats have no double bonds so every carbon atom in the chain is "saturated" with hydrogen atoms. These fats are typically solid at room temperature. They are also the most debated about type of fat due to their association with heart disease.

FOOD SOURCES:

- High-fat cuts of meat (beef, lamb, pork)
- Chicken skin
- Whole-fat dairy products (milk and cream)
- Butter and Cheese
- Ice cream
- Palm and coconut oil

HOW MUCH DO I NEED?

Current recommendations recommend you limit saturated fat intake to ~10% of your total calories for the day. (2000 kcals/day = 200 calories from saturated fat.)

The Math: Multiply the number of grams of saturated fat by 9 to calculate calories from saturated fat.

MONOUNSATURATED FATS

Monounsaturated fats have one double bond along their chain length. This type of fat is semi-solid at room temperature. Monounsaturated fats are seen as protective against heart disease as they lower "bad" cholesterol.

FOOD SOURCES:

- Nuts, Peanut Butter
- Olive Oil
- Canola Oil
- Peanut Oil
- Avocados

HOW MUCH DO I NEED?

Choose foods high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat more often than those high in saturated fat.

POLYUNSATURATED FATS

Polyunsaturated fats have more than one double bond in their chain and are typically very thin liquids at room temperature and remain liquid even when refrigerated. This group of fats also includes the essential fatty acid, Omega-3 and Omega-6.

FOOD SOURCES:

- Sunflower Oil
- Corn Oil
- Soybean Oil
- Fatty Fish (Salmon, Tuna, Mackerel, Trout)
- Walnuts
- Flaxseed

HOW MUCH DO I NEED?

Choose foods high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat more often than those high in saturated fat.

The American Heart Association recommends eating a serving of fatty fish twice weekly. (Consume walnuts or flaxseed if you don't like fish.)