

# Healthy Fats

## What Does Fat Do?

Fat is one of the three main building blocks of food, along with carbohydrate and protein. You need some fat in your diet—but not too much.

- Fat from food helps your body make new cells and tissues. Your body also needs fat to absorb certain vitamins.
- Fat has more calories than carbohydrates or protein (1 gram fat = 9 calories; 1 gram protein or carbohydrate = 4 calories).

## What Types of Fats Are in Food?

**Unsaturated fats** are healthy fats. Types include monounsaturated fats, polyunsaturated fats, and omega-3 fats.

- These fats do not increase cholesterol or triglyceride levels in the blood. Some types, such as omega-3 fats, may actually lower your triglycerides.
- Omega-3 fats may prevent heart disease and provide other health benefits.
- **Choose** unsaturated fats instead of the unhealthy types.

**Saturated fats** and **trans fats** are unhealthy fats.

- These fats increase cholesterol and triglyceride levels. This puts you at greater risk of heart attack or stroke.
- **Limit** these unhealthy fats.

## Tips for Choosing Healthy (Unsaturated) Fats

- Snack on a handful of nuts or sunflower seeds.
- Use olives and avocado in salads and sandwiches.
- Try different nut butters (such as cashew or almond butter) in sandwiches
- To get more omega-3 fats:
  - Eat fish at least twice a week.
  - Try flax-fortified cereals and breads.
  - Add ground flaxseed to baked goods, cereals, soups, and salads.

## Which Foods have Healthy (Unsaturated) Fats?

### Monounsaturated Fats:

- Some vegetable oils, including olive oil, canola oil, peanut oil, sunflower oil, and sesame oil
- Avocados
- Olives
- Nut butters, such as peanut butter
- Many nuts and seeds, such as macadamia nuts, pecans, and almonds

### Polyunsaturated Fats:

- Some vegetable oils, including soybean oil, corn oil, and safflower oil
- Fatty fish, such as salmon, mackerel, herring, and trout
- Some nuts and seeds, such as walnuts and sunflower seeds

### Omega-3 Fats:

- Oily fish
- Flax seeds and flaxseed oil
- Walnuts and walnut oil
- Canola oil



## Tips for Getting Less Saturated and *Trans* Fats

Avoid ...	Choose instead ...
75% lean ground beef (75% lean means it is 25% fat)	> 90% lean ground beef or ground skinless chicken or turkey breast
Marbled, high-fat meats (such as prime cuts)	Leaner cuts: round, loin, sirloin, or chuck
Pork bacon	Low-fat bacon, turkey bacon, ham, or Canadian bacon
Fried chicken	Skinless chicken
Beef or pork hot dogs, Polish sausage, bratwurst	Low-fat hot dogs, turkey franks, tofu- or soy-based franks
Pizza with pepperoni, sausage, or extra cheese	Pizza with Canadian bacon, low-fat ground beef, or vegetables
Sandwiches with bologna, salami, pastrami, or corned beef	Sandwiches with turkey, chicken, boiled ham, lean roast beef, peanut butter, or other nut butters
Regular mayonnaise	Reduced-fat mayonnaise or mustard
Whole milk, 2% milk, whole chocolate milk	Fat-free (skim) or 1% milk; reduced-fat chocolate milk
Whole milk yogurt or sour cream	Fat-free or reduced-fat yogurt; low-fat sour cream
Regular cheese	Fat-free or reduced-fat cheese
Pasta with alfredo or cream sauce	Pasta with marinara sauce
Butter, stick margarine, lard, shortening	Plant stanol spreads, yogurt-based spreads, reduced-fat soft or liquid margarines
Cream in cooking	Low-fat milk or yogurt
Cream-based salad dressings	Reduced-fat salad dressings; vinegar and oil dressings
Tartar sauce	Lemon juice
Packaged cookies, cakes, and crackers	Low-fat snacks; homemade baked goods made with oils instead of butter or margarine