

Good Fats, Bad Fats, and Obesity

Low-fat foods are lauded as superior to whole fat foods. But low-fat foods are generally loaded with sugar and other processed ingredients to enrich the taste lost when real, whole fat ingredients are removed.

Good fats are especially important for infants and toddlers because they are necessary for proper growth and development.

Saturated Fats

Saturated fat has been easy to demonise by the fake health food lobby. The name conjures up images of greasy food and clogged veins, and the idea that saturated fat is bad for your heart has become so ingrained in the medical and health community that it's very difficult to break through that misinformation barrier. The fact of the matter is that the saturated fat = heart disease link, which began in 1953, was a *hypothesis* that did not stand up to further scrutiny.

In reality saturated fats are 'stable fats' due to their having a full complement of hydrogen atoms. It is this stability that preserves animal fats and prevents them from turning rancid. Studies that originally blamed saturated fats as problematic failed to separate trans-fats (see section below) from saturated fats.

Research overwhelmingly supports that saturated fat is essential to a healthy diet. When you eat saturated fats as part of your meal, they slow down absorption so that you can go longer without feeling hungry. Your body requires saturated fats from animal and vegetable sources for optimal functioning.

Saturated fats are needed for the proper function of your liver, immune system, heart, lungs, satiety (regulating hunger), bones (to assimilate calcium), hormones, genetic regulation, and they also help prevent cancers.

Even the saturated fat found in (good quality) sausages can contribute some health benefits if eaten with salads or cooked vegetables.

Also please note that human breast milk contains 54% saturated fat. Since breast milk is the most perfect diet in existence for developing infants, the presence of high amounts of saturated fat cannot easily be construed as a 'mistake'.

Saturated fat will NOT cause obesity, nor will it promote heart disease. The replacement of nutrient dense saturated, traditional fats and foods with highly processed, inflammatory vegetable oils, grains, and carbohydrates has contributed to a health epidemic in the US and the UK. This crisis includes overwhelming rates of heart disease, diabetes, obesity, cancer, auto-immune disorders, psychiatric illnesses, and food allergies.

Sweden recently changed its dietary guidelines to include more saturated fats. Physicians in England and the US are also speaking out, recommending saturated fat consumption.

Carbohydrates

Although the Western diet is high in red and processed meats and saturated fats, it's also alarmingly high in sugar and refined carbs like bread and pasta. When you reduce saturated fat and increase refined carbohydrates, you end up promoting obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.

In a nutshell, eating fat and protein does not make you fat – carbohydrates do (see sheet on “What Causes or Contributes to Obesity?”).

Omega-3 Fats

Omega-3 is found in fish oils. Deficiencies have been tied to the following problems: mental fog, weight gain, allergies, poor quality of sleep, dry hair, lack of concentration, depression, brittle fingernails, arthritis, memory problems, dry skin, fatigue.

Polyunsaturated and Monounsaturated Fats

Polyunsaturated fats (Essential Fatty Acids) in their natural forms such as oily fish, flaxseed oil, Cod liver oil, evening primrose oil, and borage oil, are healthy. They reduce blood pressure, stroke and heart disease, and improve brain function.

But processed or refined polyunsaturated fats or oils – the kind you get in cooking oils - are unstable, easily becoming rancid when exposed to the heat, oxygen, and humidity involved in cooking or refining. When rancid they produce compounds known as free radicals that can damage the body, increasing the risk of obesity.

Sunflower oil, corn oil, soy oil, or canola oil, (all common components of blended vegetable oil) are also high in omega-6 fatty acids. Too much is bad for health. So limit consumption of these oils, and use a monounsaturated fat such as unrefined olive oil which is relatively stable and doesn't go rancid as quickly (though don't allow olive oil to burn as it will then lose all of its nutritional integrity).

Other monounsaturated fats include nuts, avocados, grapeseed oil, ground nut oil, peanut oil, sesame oil.

Trans-Fats

One hundred years ago, fewer than 1 in 100 Americans were obese. Then Proctor and Gamble started marketing Crisco as a new kind of food – the first commercially marketed trans-fat. Crisco was originally used to make candles and soap, but with electrification causing a decline in candle sales, P&G decided to promote the fat as a 'healthier' all-vegetable-derived shortening.

Trans-fats are man-made fats. They are formed when hydrogen is added to vegetable oil during food processing in order to make it solidify. This process, known as hydrogenation, makes fats less likely to spoil, so foods stay fresh longer, have a longer shelf life, and also have a less greasy feel. The end result of the hydrogenation process is a completely unnatural fat.

Also known as partially-hydrogenated oils, trans-fats are the real baddies of the fat world and should be completely avoided. Until recently trans-fats were found in almost all processed foods.

Trans-fats have been linked to heart disease and can raise bad cholesterol levels while lowering good cholesterol levels. They can also cause major clogging of the arteries, type 2 diabetes and other serious health problems.

The health lobby were almost the last people to admit the dangers of trans-fats, and until recently the British Heart Foundation hardly mentioned them in their advice on healthy eating.

Sources of Good or Healthy Fats

Natural whole real foods:

Organically-raised grass-fed meats, coconuts and coconut oil, olives and olive oil, avocados, raw nuts - eg almonds and pecans, organic egg yolks, butter made from raw grass-fed organic milk, cheese, whole milk, palm oil, unheated organic nut oils, animal-based omega-3.

Sources of Bad or Trans-Fats

Man-made 'foods':

Margarine (which is actually just a few molecules away from being plastic) and other low-fat spreads, vegetable shortening, partially hydrogenated vegetable oils, most processed and fast foods.

Quoted, Summarised, and Edited from the Following Sources:

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