



Fats

For years, we've heard the same message: "Eating fat makes you fat" and now a new one "Eat mostly fat in your diet." Foods with certain fats have been banned from restaurants, low-fat products line the shelves of grocery stores, and almost every diet plan warns of the dangers of fat. Now other diet plans recommend things like adding butter to your coffee and replacing balanced meals with high fat ones. If only good nutrition could be narrowed to down to modifying just one nutrient.

Fats play a role in good health.

Some fats are good for you, and your body needs them every day in healthy amounts. For example, dietary fat is needed for organ protection and hormone production. Also, the myelin sheath that conducts nerve signals, the oil that nourishes your hair, skin, and nails, and the bilayer of all cells are made from fat. Additionally, vitamins A, D, E, and K are fat soluble and require fat for absorption and storage. Fats provide long lasting condensed energy and are also a key component for promoting satiety and satisfaction from meals and snacks.

Omega-3 fats are great for your heart and help reduce inflammation. Three types of omega-3 fats are ALA, EPA, and DHA.

Common Sources

- Fatty freshwater fish (e.g., salmon, herring, mackerel, sardines, fresh tuna, halibut, oysters)
- Flaxseeds, chia seeds, and hemp seeds
- Walnuts
- Fortified foods (e.g., eggs, milk, juice, yogurt, and grains)
- ALA-type omega-3: Brussels sprouts, kale, spinach, canola, flaxseed oil, soybean oil, and walnut oil

Monounsaturated fats can protect your heart.

Common Sources

- Canola oil, sunflower oil, and olive oil
- Avocados
- Nuts (e.g. pecans, almonds, pistachios, peanuts, and nut butters)
- Seeds (e.g. sunflower and sesame)

Some fats should be enjoyed less often.

Research shows that in addition to lifestyle factors like tobacco use, inactivity, and poor stress management, diets rich in saturated or trans fats can increase the risk of heart disease. Diets with too much fat can also lead to certain cancers and weight gain, which in turn can lead to diabetes. Diets primarily made up of fats and high fat foods are often low in nutrient dense foods like whole grains, fruits, and vegetables that help reduce inflammation and promote health.

Common Sources

- High-fat beef and pork
- Butter, margarine, and coconut oil
- Full-fat dairy
- Baked goods
- Fried foods

The takeaway.

You don't need to eliminate or overconsume fats to be healthy. Instead, consider eating high-fat foods in a few times a week and including a small source of fats with all your meals.