



FRESH CONVERSATIONS

Iowa Department of Public Health

Volume 7, Issue 4



Fat Can Be Heart Healthy



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Look for healthy fats



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Go Mediterranean with this dish

EAT LESS SATURATED FAT and replace it with unsaturated fats, especially polyunsaturated fats, to lower your risk for cardiovascular disease. *(American Heart Association Presidential Advisory, 2017)*

If you believe eating low-fat foods is always best for heart health, consider this: the total amount of fat you eat is not as important as the type of fat you eat.

Different fats affect your health differently. Let's take a closer look at saturated fats.

In 2017, a panel of medical experts released an advisory from the American Heart Association. The scientists reviewed the latest research on dietary fats and cardiovascular disease and strongly concluded that lowering the intake of saturated fat and replacing with unsaturated fats will lower the occurrence of cardiovascular disease.

Specifically, the expert panel advised to shift food choices from those high in saturated fats to those high in polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats.

Foods with saturated fat	Foods with polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole milk dairy products • Butter • Cocoa butter • Fatty cuts of meat • Poultry skin • Bacon • Sausage • Palm oil • Coconut oil 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant-based oils such as safflower, sunflower, corn, soybean, peanut, canola and olive • Nuts • Seeds • Avocados • Fatty fish

SATURATED FATS found in animal products and tropical oils, have the greatest effect on increasing LDL (low-density lipoprotein), sometimes called "bad" cholesterol. It makes up most of your body's cholesterol.



Mix up your oils!

Simple Steps for Heart Health

Vegetable oils sold on grocery shelves have a mix of saturated and unsaturated fatty acids—some in greater amounts than others.

Olive oil, rich in monounsaturated fats, is important in the heart-healthy Mediterranean style of eating. But other vegetable oils are high in polyunsaturated fats, which have their own health benefits.

So which oil should you use? To get a good mix of unsaturated fats, mix them up!

For example, cook with canola oil and use olive oil when you want its flavor on salads or vegetables. Canola oil has a neutral flavor, high smoke point (tolerates high heat) and is relatively inexpensive.

Soybean oil is often in prepared foods (like salad dressings, mayonnaise and margarine) and restaurant foods. And if a bottle of oil is labeled as “vegetable oil,” it’s most likely from soybeans.

Nutrition Label Fat Facts

- Total fat is the total amount of unsaturated, saturated and trans fat. Both saturated fat and trans fat can raise your blood cholesterol level and heart disease risk.
- Eat as little trans fat as possible.
- Check the ingredient list to avoid foods with hydrogenated oils. Oils are hydrogenated to keep them solid at room temperature.

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%

DID YOU KNOW?
If the oil is listed as vegetable oil, it is probably made from soybeans.

HYDROGENATING OILS lengthen the oil’s shelf life allowing it to store longer in your cupboard before spoiling.

Eat Like the Greek!

Following a Mediterranean-style dietary pattern is considered one of the best ways to eat for healthy aging. But what is a “Mediterranean diet?”

What it’s not: refined pasta loaded with meatballs or sausage; rich creamy sauces; pizza loaded with cheese and pepperoni.

What it is: Think of whole foods traditionally eaten by working-class people in the Mediterranean region years ago when meal times were a priority. They ate what they grew, raised or caught—along with what was available from local gardens and markets.

Enjoy the health benefits of the Mediterranean-style eating.

- Choose more plant foods like fruits, vegetables, beans and legumes.
- Experiment with fish entrees rich in omega-3, such as trout salmon, mackerel and tuna (albacore).
- Add olives, nuts and olive oil to snacks and salad.

The bottom line for heart health: Eat **more** whole, plant-based foods and **fewer** animal-based foods and processed foods. Choose heart-healthy fats; limit refined grains and added sugars.

IT’S NOT ALL ABOUT FATS. Fiber is essential to a heart health, too. A Mediterranean-style diet that is rich in a variety of beans, nuts, seeds, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains will deliver a wide array of cholesterol-lowering soluble fibers.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY makes muscles stronger, including your heart.

Exercise Your Heart Muscle

A strong heart can pump out more blood with each beat. When your heart works better, it doesn’t have to beat as fast. This stronger push and slower beating can keep your blood pressure lower.

Activity also helps your body pull more oxygen from your blood. More oxygen to your heart and other muscles means you can work harder, dance longer or hike up a hill without getting winded.

Bonus! Physical activity is a good way to boost HDL (high-density lipoprotein), or “good” cholesterol. HDL absorbs cholesterol and carries it back to the liver. The liver then flushes it from the body.

High levels of HDL cholesterol can lower your risk for heart disease and stroke.

Be Active. Take Action!

This month, I will be active by...

Newsletter sources:

Dietary Fats and Cardiovascular Disease: Presidential Advisory From the American Heart Association. Circulation. 2017;136:e1–e23. DOI: 10.1161/CIR.0000000000000510
“Why the Low Diet Failed.” Tufts Health and Nutrition Letter, Feb. 13, 2019. Retrieved April 1, 2020. https://www.nutritionletter.tufts.edu/healthy-eating/why-the-low-fat-diet-failed?MailingID=26&st=email&sc=WU20200331-Sub&utm_source=ActiveCam%E2%80%A6





Testimonial of the Month
An inspiring force!

When **Robert “Bob” Taylor** visited his cardiologist two years ago, he was diagnosed with heart disease. He was told he would have stents placed, but Bob asked if he could try to lose weight first. After careful research, he chose to adopt a vegetarian diet.

A big part of Bob’s diet involves oatmeal and a hearty bean and lentil soup. He dropped 95 pounds in two years following a meal plan that worked for him and his body. He stays active with normal chores and walking his dog.

Bob volunteers at the Northwest Meal Site in Des Moines and has attended the **Fresh Conversations** meetings for at least three years. He enjoys the dynamic husband and wife team, Abi and Brian Lalor, who bring valuable information each month.

Bob—your dedication and success are an inspiration to others!

Decoding Healthy Fat

Use the key to unlock these sources of healthy, unsaturated fat.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M
12	5	19	10	3	21	17	23	14	24	2	26	15

N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
22	7	25	9	1	18	11	6	13	20	4	16	8

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MEDITERRANEAN TUNA SALAD

This isn’t a recipe. It’s a creation!

Mix albacore tuna with rinsed and drained chickpeas. Add small pieces of crunchy veggies like celery and cucumber. Add chopped green onions, red onions or radishes for more flavor. Have pitted olives on hand? Toss them in, too.



Make a dressing with olive oil, fresh lemon or lime juice, a pinch of dried oregano or chopped parsley. A little Dijon mustard will add some zing. (Is this over the top? It’s okay to use mayo.)

Recipe adapted from: <https://www.themediterraneandish.com/mediterranean-tuna-salad/>

Eat Healthy. Take Action!

This month, I will eat healthy by...
