

Health Bulletin

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

#76 in a series of Health Bulletins on issues of pressing interest to all New Yorkers

Good Fats/Bad Fats How to know the difference



• Available in Spanish and Chinese: call 311 or visit nyc.gov/health
• Disponible en español: llame al 311 o visite nyc.gov/health
• 需要中文服務 - 可電 311 或造訪網址: nyc.gov/health



Fats are important.

They provide energy and help your body work properly.

- Fats are an important part of a healthy diet.
- But all fat is high in calories, so eating too much may lead to weight gain.
- One gram of fat has 9 calories – *more than twice* the calories in a gram of protein or carbohydrate.
- Fats should make up between 20% to 35% of total calories in an adult's diet.

Some are good for your heart and others are not.

Unsaturated fats are heart-healthy.

- Most of the fat you eat should be unsaturated (either **monounsaturated** or **polyunsaturated** – see **Choose Fats That Are Good for Your Heart**).
- Cook with olive or canola oil instead of butter, lard or shortening.
- Snack on small amounts of nuts and seeds (almonds, walnuts, sunflower seeds) instead of potato chips or cookies.
- Add avocado to a sandwich instead of cheese or mayonnaise.
- Get more “omega 3s” by eating cold-water fish such as salmon or trout at least twice a week. (“Omega 3s” are a kind of unsaturated fat that is especially good for your heart.)

Avoid trans fat! It increases the risk of heart disease.

- Trans fat is the worst kind of fat – even worse than saturated fat.
- Trans fat is restricted in New York City restaurants. But when shopping for food, always check labels and choose products with 0 grams trans fat.
- Be careful – some foods labeled “trans fat free” can be loaded with other unwanted nutrients such as saturated fat or sugar.

Eat as little saturated fat as possible.

- Saturated fat is found mostly in animal products such as cheese, whole milk and beef.
- For a healthier heart, whenever you can, replace foods high in saturated fat with those that contain unsaturated fat. (See **Small Changes Add Up**.)

What about cholesterol?

- While cholesterol in food can raise blood cholesterol, most high blood cholesterol comes from eating food with saturated and trans fat.
- Food labeled “cholesterol-free” may still contain saturated and trans fat.

Choose Fats That Are Good for Your Heart

Unsaturated Fats

Polyunsaturated Fat

- Seafood and fish, such as salmon, trout and herring
- Corn, soybean and sunflower oils
- Walnuts
- Flaxseeds
- Hummus
- Tofu



Monounsaturated Fat

- Olives and olive oil
- Canola, safflower and peanut oils
- Almonds, pecans, cashews, hazelnuts, peanuts and most other nuts
- Peanut butter
- Avocados



Avoid Fats That Raise Your Risk of Heart Attack and Stroke

Trans Fat

- Any product with *partially hydrogenated vegetable oil*
- Read the label! Other products may contain trans fat, *such as*:
 - Margarines, especially stick margarine
 - Microwave popcorn, and cheese-and-cracker lunch kits
 - Frozen foods, such as pizza rolls, pies, breakfast sandwiches, and fried chicken and creamy pasta meals
 - Cake, biscuit and cookie mixes, and roll, biscuit or crescent dough
 - Frosting and pie crusts
 - Pastries, cookies and cakes



Saturated Fat

- Meat (especially beef, pork, bacon, sausage, and canned and deli meats)
- Whole milk and other dairy products (cheese, butter, cream, ice cream)
- Lard and suet
- Palm oil
- Coconut milk and oil
- Chocolate and cocoa butter
- Many packaged or prepared baked goods (such as cakes, cookies, doughnuts and quick breads)



Read labels before you buy.

Compare Nutrition Facts labels to choose foods that are lowest in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol.

Blue Cheese Dressing

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 2 tablespoons (30ml)
Servings Per Container 16

Amount Per Serving

Calories 160 Calories from Fat 150

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 17g	26%
Saturated Fat 3.5g	18%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 15mg	5%

Olive Oil and Red Wine Vinaigrette Dressing

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 2 tablespoons (30ml)
Servings Per Container 16

Amount Per Serving

Calories 80 Calories from Fat 45

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 5g	8%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%

- Choose the product with the **lowest amount of saturated fat**. The blue cheese dressing has more than three times the saturated fat as the vinaigrette.
- Always choose products with **0 grams trans fat**.
- Choose products with **less cholesterol**.
- **Calories count**. The vinaigrette has *half* the calories of the blue cheese dressing.

Choose carefully.

Instead of This



This cheeseburger is high in saturated fat and cholesterol. The French fries add a lot of extra calories and fat.

Choose This



This piece of salmon is rich in heart-healthy omega-3 polyunsaturated fat. The vegetables are cooked in olive oil (monounsaturated fat), and the brown rice is a heart-healthy whole grain.

Small Changes Add Up

Instead of eating these foods...	Choose these instead
Whole milk 	• 1% or non-fat milk 
Butter (as a spread)  	• 0 grams trans fat spread • Olive oil (as a dip for bread) 
Cheese  	• Reduced-fat cheese 
Crackers with cheese  	• Whole grain crackers with peanut butter 
Ice cream  	• Low-fat frozen yogurt • Sorbet
Whole eggs  	• Egg whites • Egg substitute
Regular ground beef  	• Extra lean ground beef 
Steak (beef)  	• Salmon, halibut, or tuna steak 
Chicken with the skin on  	• Chicken with skin removed 
Cold cuts and deli meat  	• Sliced turkey breast 
Cream, butter, lard, or vegetable shortening (for cooking) 	• Olive oil, canola oil or peanut oil 
Chips (fried)  	• Small amounts of nuts • Make "party mix" with nuts and whole-grain breakfast cereal 
Cheese dip  	• Fresh salsa or guacamole

More Information and Help

- **NYC Health Department:** nyc.gov/heart
- **Health Bulletins (healthy heart):** nyc.gov/health or call 311:
 - #42: Control Your Cholesterol: Keep Your Heart Healthy
 - #50: High Blood Pressure: It's In Your Court
 - #51: How to Lose Weight – And Keep It Off
 - #72: Cut the Salt!
 - #73: Are You Pouring on the Pounds? Don't Drink Yourself Fat
- **Brochure: "Eat Fish, Choose Wisely (Protect Against Mercury): A Guide for Pregnant and Breastfeeding Woman and Young Children":** nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/edp/mercury_brochure.pdf or call 311
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/basics/fat
- **Mayo Clinic:** mayoclinic.com/health/fat/NU00262
- **Harvard School of Public Health:** www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/fats.html
- **U.S. Department of Agriculture:** mypyramid.gov or nal.usda.gov/fnic
- **U.S. Food and Drug Administration ("How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label"):** www.fda.gov/Food/LabelingNutrition/ConsumerInformation/ucm078889.htm

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