

FATS

When it comes to diet, fats get a bad rap. Some of this is justified because certain types of fat — and the fat-like substance cholesterol — may play a role in:

- cardiovascular disease
- diabetes
- cancer
- obesity

But not all fats are created equal. Some fats are better for you than others and may even help to promote good health. Knowing the difference can help you determine which fats to avoid and which to eat in moderation.

Research is continuing to evolve on dietary fat, but some facts are clear.

Dietary fat, also known as fatty acids, can be found in foods from both plants and animals. Certain fats have been linked to negative effects on heart health, but others have been found to offer significant health benefits.

Fat is as essential to your diet as protein and carbohydrates are in fuelling your body with energy. Certain bodily functions also rely on the presence of fat. For example, some vitamins require fat to dissolve into your bloodstream and provide nutrients.

However, the excess calories from eating too much fat of any type can lead to weight gain.

Foods and oils contain a mixture of fatty acids, but the predominant type of fat they contain is what makes them more healthy or less healthy.

Gender	Calories	Fat	Saturates	Sugar
Female	2000	70g	20g	30g
Male	2500	95g	30g	30g

Saturated Fats

Saturated fats are found in many foods, both sweet and savoury.

Most of them come from animal sources, including meat and dairy products, as well as some plant foods, such as palm oil and coconut oil.

Foods high in saturated fats:

- fatty cuts of meat
- meat products, including sausages and pies
- butter, ghee, and lard
- cheese, especially hard cheese like cheddar
- cream, soured cream and ice cream
- some savoury snacks, like cheese crackers and some popcorns
- chocolate confectionery
- biscuits, cakes, and pastries
- palm oil
- coconut oil and coconut cream

Trans Fat: Avoid When Possible

Short for “trans fatty acids,” trans fat appears in foods that contain partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. These are the worst fats for you. You might find trans fat in:

- fried foods (French fries, doughnuts, deep-fried fast foods)
- margarine (stick and tub)
- vegetable shortening
- baked goods (cookies, cakes, pastries)
- processed snack foods (crackers, microwave popcorn)

Like saturated fat, trans fat can raise LDL (bad) cholesterol, also known as “bad” cholesterol. Trans fat can also suppress HDL (good) cholesterol levels, or “good” cholesterol.

Doctors have also linked trans fats to an increased risk of inflammation in the body. This inflammation can cause harmful health effects that may include heart disease, diabetes, and stroke.



Unsaturated Fats

If you want to reduce your risk of heart disease, it's best to reduce your overall fat intake and swap saturated fats for unsaturated fats.

There's good evidence that replacing saturated fats with some unsaturated fats can help to lower your cholesterol level.

Mostly found in oils from plants and fish, unsaturated fats can be either monounsaturated or polyunsaturated.



Polyunsaturated Fat

Polyunsaturated fats are known as “essential fats” because the body cannot make them and needs to get them from foods. Plant-based foods and oils are the primary source of this fat.

Like monounsaturated fat, polyunsaturated fat can decrease your risk for heart disease by lowering blood cholesterol levels, according to the American health association.

A certain type of this fat, called omega-3 fatty acids, has been shown to be particularly beneficial for your heart.

Omega-3s appear to not only decrease the risk of coronary artery disease, but they also help lower blood pressure levels and guard against irregular heart rates. The following types of foods contain omega-3 fatty acids:

- salmon
- herring
- sardines
- trout
- walnuts
- flaxseed
- chia seeds
- canola oil

In addition to omega-3 fatty acids, you can find polyunsaturated fat in the following foods, which contain omega-6 fatty acids:

- tofu
- roasted soybeans and soy nut butter
- walnuts
- seeds (sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds)
- vegetable oils (corn oil, safflower oil, sesame oil, sunflower oil)
- soft margarine (liquid or tub)

UNSATURATED FATS



Recommended daily intake:
20-35% of daily caloric intake

SATURATED FATS



Recommended daily intake:
No more than 10% of daily caloric intake

TRANS FATS



Recommended daily intake:
None!

- The “good” fat!
- Reduces cholesterol levels
- Decreases risk of heart disease and stroke

- Can raise LDL or “bad” cholesterol
- Can raise HDL or “good” cholesterol
- Can increase chances of heart disease and stroke

- Man-made
- Raises LDL or “bad” cholesterol
- Lowers HDL or “good” cholesterol
- Increases chances of heart disease, stroke, developing type 2 diabetes

Easy Tips To Help You Reduce Unhealthy Fats

- Cook with vegetable oils and spreads like olive oil, rapeseed oil and sunflower oil.
- Measure the amount of oil you use with a teaspoon or use a spray bottle.
- Make your sandwich fillers healthier by using spreads made from vegetable oils and nuts. And swap hard cheese and processed meat for oily fish and vegetables like avocado, and lettuce.
- Reduce your intake of processed meats like hamburgers and sausages. Choose lean meats (meats with less fat) like skinless chicken, turkey and fish. Or plant-based protein like lentils, beans or Quorn.
- Snack on unsalted nuts and fruit, rather than biscuits, cakes and crisps. Or make your own healthy snacks like homemade fresh fruit scones.
- Use semi-skimmed, skimmed or 1% milk. Or no added sugar, plant-based milk like almond milk, soya milk, oat milk and cashew milk.
- Use lower fat cheeses like feta, mozzarella, half-fat cheddar, edam and ricotta, rather than cheeses like halloumi and cheddar. Or grate your cheese to make it go further in your meal.
- Check the amount of saturated fat per serving on your foods labels to help you keep to the recommended daily intake.

Cholesterol

What is high cholesterol?

- High cholesterol is when you have too much of a fatty substance called cholesterol in your blood.
- It's mainly caused by eating fatty food, not exercising enough, being overweight, smoking and drinking alcohol. It can also run in families.
- You can lower your cholesterol by eating healthily and getting more exercise. Some people also need to take medicine.
- Too much cholesterol can block your blood vessels. It makes you more likely to have heart problems or a stroke.
- High cholesterol does not usually cause symptoms. You can only find out if you have it from a blood test.

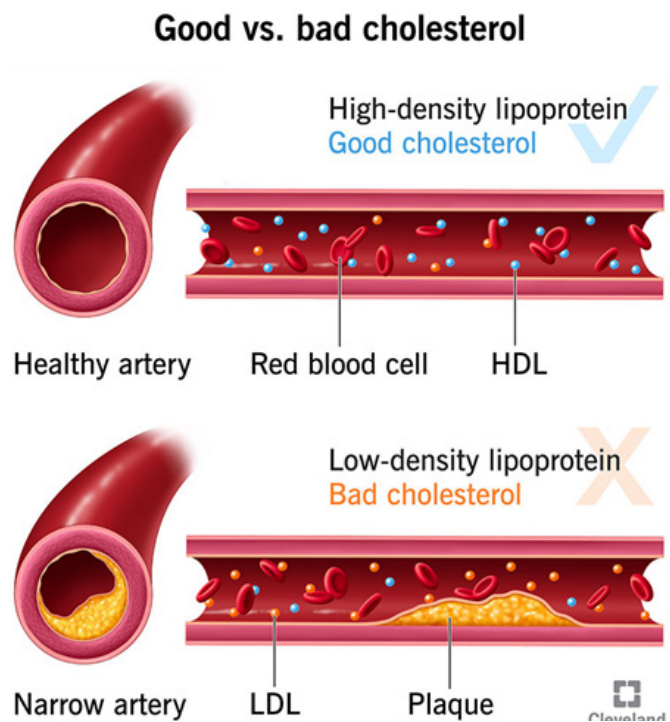
How Can We Lower Cholesterol?

Eat Less Fatty Food

To reduce your cholesterol, try to cut down on fatty food, especially food that contains a type of fat called saturated fat. You can still have foods that contain a healthier type of fat called unsaturated fat. Check labels on food to see what type of fat it has in it.

Try To Eat More:

- oily fish, like mackerel and salmon
- brown rice, wholegrain bread and wholewheat pasta
- nuts and seeds
- fruits and vegetables



Try To Eat Less:

- meat pies, sausages, and fatty meat
- butter, lard and ghee.
- cream and hard cheese, like cheddar
- cakes and biscuits
- food that contains coconut oil or palm oil

Exercise More

Aim to do at least 150 minutes (2.5 hours) of exercise a week. Some good things to try when starting out include:

- walking – try to walk fast enough so your heart starts beating faster.
- swimming
- cycling

Try a few different exercises to find something you like doing. You're more likely to keep doing it if you enjoy it.

Stop Smoking

Smoking can raise your cholesterol and make you more likely to have serious problems like heart attacks, strokes, and cancer.

If you want to stop smoking, you can get help and support from:

- your GP
- the NHS Stop Smoking Service – your GP can refer you or you can ring the helpline on 0300 123 1044 (England only)

They can give you useful tips and advice about ways to stop cravings.

Cut Down On Alcohol

- avoid drinking more than 14 units of alcohol a week
- have several drink-free days each week
- avoid drinking lots of alcohol in a short time (binge drinking)

Ask your GP for help and advice if you're struggling to cut down.