

Fats 101



Fats are one energy source used by the body, and are made up of a combination of fatty acids. Saturated fats (like butter and lard) are solid at room temperature and come mostly from animal sources. Unsaturated fats (such as canola, corn, and olive oils) are liquid at room temperature and come from plant sources. A process called hydrogenation creates a third type of fat—trans—fats.

Everybody needs some fat in their diet, but it's well-known that some fats are healthier than others and too much fat in one's diet—even the healthy kind—can be bad for your health. Here are some suggestions to help you reduce your fat intake, or at least keep it healthy:

- Buy a nonstick skillet and cook without any added oil.
- Use no-sugar-added fruit spreads on bread instead of butter or margarine; add a little peanut butter for a dose of healthy fat and protein.
- Cook with fat-free broth instead of oil.
- Switch to skim milk.
- Enjoy mustard on a sandwich instead of mayonnaise.
- Squeeze a lemon or lime on steamed vegetables instead of adding butter or cheese.
- Steer entirely clear of trans fats, which are present in most packaged baked goods and snack items.

Avoid unnecessary fats when possible, and use moderate amounts of heart-healthy unsaturated oils to help lower blood cholesterol levels. [Choosing the healthiest oil varieties](#) and limiting the total amount of fat you eat daily are great ways to lead a heart-healthy life.

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