

Dietary Fats: The good, the bad, and the ugly

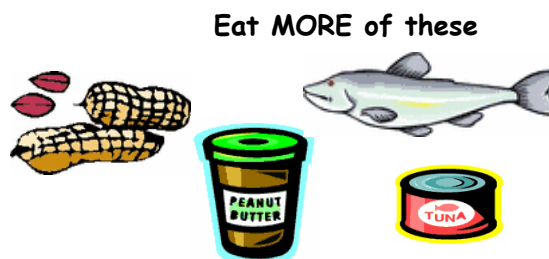
Did you know that the **types** of fats you eat are more important to your health than the **total amount** of fat in your diet? Eating foods rich in plant and fish oils, and low in fats from animal sources (saturate fat) and *trans* fat, reduces the risk for heart disease and type 2 diabetes, both of which can begin developing during childhood.

Making simple changes in your food habits can make a big difference for health.

UNSATURATED FATS — “The Good” →

What: Oils found in plant and fish foods

Where: Vegetable oils (olive, canola, etc.), fish, nuts, seeds, peanut and other nut butters.



Eat LOW or NON fat dairy, lean meats



← SATURATED FATS — “The Bad”

What: Fats found mostly in animal foods

Where: Whole milk, cheese, butter, ice cream, red meat, sour cream, lard, coconut and palm oils.

TRANS FATS — “The Ugly” →

What: Vegetable oils that are chemically changed to increase the shelf life of processed foods.

Where: Fast foods, snacks (cookies, crackers, etc.), baked goods, and stick margarines.



Tips for making changes at home

- Select dairy products made with 1% or non-fat milk, instead of whole or 2% milk.
- Substitute fish, chicken, legumes, nuts and seeds for red meat at meal times.
- Limit fast food meals to 1-2/week.
- Cook with liquid oils and tub margarine, instead of butter, stick margarine or lard.
- Read food labels to select foods with NO *trans* fat.* Avoid foods with “partially hydrogenated vegetable oil” or “shortening” in the ingredients list.

*By 2006, food labels must declare grams of *trans* fat.

For more information:

Check out www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/fats.html

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