

# Parent Communications— Fat in Foods

Optional e-mail message: Use this sample message to communicate with parents by e-mail (if available). This message can also be adapted for use in your organization's publications. Be sure to include the credit "Provided by Harvard Prevention Research Center on Nutrition and Physical Activity."

## **Subject Line: Healthy Habits Power Tips—Fat in Foods**

Dear (insert school name and grade) Parents:

This week for the *Eat Well & Keep Moving* program, the (school name and grade) will be doing several fun activities with your children that will teach them about fat in foods. Our key messages will be the following:

- ▶ We need fat in foods to give our bodies the nutrition they need and to add flavor to food.
- ▶ Our bodies like the healthy fat that tends to come from plants and is liquid at room temperature. Examples are olive oil, canola oil, vegetable oil, and peanut oil; nuts, seeds, and fish also contain healthy fat. Choosing these sources of fat more often is good for your health.
- ▶ Our bodies do not like unhealthy fat, which is solid at room temperature. Examples include saturated fat (which is usually found in animal products such as meat and whole milk) and trans fat (which is found in fast-food fries and store-bought cookies).
- ▶ We should choose healthy fat, limit saturated fat, and avoid trans fat.

Use the following Healthy Habits Power Tips to help you select and prepare foods with healthy fat. Pick one tip that you want to try right away and go for it!

- ▶ Choose low-fat dairy (1% or nonfat milk) when you shop and order out. Milk is the biggest source of saturated fat for children, so you can make a big difference in their fat intake with this one change. Children under 2 years old should continue drinking whole milk for proper growth and nutrition.
- ▶ Minimize fast-food eating. Foods served in fast-food restaurants are often high in unhealthy saturated and trans fat. Save fast-food eating for when you really need convenience.
- ▶ Read labels when you purchase foods to avoid products with trans fat. Look for "0g trans fat" *and* read the ingredients to avoid foods with partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. Many manufacturers are reducing or eliminating trans fat from their products.

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(continued)

- ▶ Cook with liquid plant oils (such as olive, canola, peanut, and soy) instead of butter, stick margarine, shortening, or lard.

To learn more about choosing foods with healthy fat, visit [www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/fats.html](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/fats.html).

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