AtlantiCare
REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER
The Center for Surgical Weight Loss & Wellness

Bariatric Support Group

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The Importance of Eating a Healthy Breakfast

Reasons why eating breakfast can improve your day!

A healthy breakfast is essential for starting the day off right. The meal is often described as the most important meal of the day. However, many people rush through their morning routines and avoid preparing breakfast. Students, especially, may want to get a few extra minutes of sleep or prepare for their upcoming classes.

1. Improve your performance

Your body becomes dehydrated after sleeping all night. Reenergize yourself with a healthy breakfast. You could see the improved benefits on your performance at work or school. When you eat breakfast, it gives your body essential nutrients to perform. A Food Research and Action Center study shows that students who eat breakfast perform better on tests and when studying reading or math. You can also see the cognitive benefits of speed, concentration, and problem-solving skills. You could do better in your academic career if your eat breakfast in the morning.

2. Benefit your skin

The American Dietician Association says that eggs, lean proteins (like turkey), and fruits are essential to a nutritious breakfast. These ingredients are packed with vitamins A and D. They also contain the essential nutrient, lutein, which helps maintain healthy skin. Take a few minutes to fry an egg or throw some fruit in your cereal. If you feel too busy in the morning, prepare a bowl of fruit or a hard-boiled egg the night before. Grab it on the way out the door.

3. Weight gain prevention

Don't skip breakfast to avoid calories. Studies show that eating a healthy morning meal helps prevent further weight gain. Avoid overindulging in high-calorie foods throughout the day. Breakfast also provides you with essential nutrients that can be stored into energy so you can feel productive for the rest of the day.

4. Energy

Energy is essential for your brain and body to work properly. You may feel slow and sheepish when you awake in the morning with low blood sugar. The American Deictic Association says that a healthy breakfast should include lean proteins (eggs, turkey sausage, grilled chicken), fruits, whole grains, and some vegetables will provide you with the most energy and dietary benefits. Ingredients with vitamin C, like berries and oranges, helps your brain signals function so that you're more alert. Plus, your memory patterns will improve.

The Importance of Eating a Healthy Breakfast

5. Feel happier

Going for a breakfast that is high in carbohydrates like oatmeal can drastically improve your mood in the morning. When you sleep for eight hours or more, your body loses nutrients and we can become irritable when we wake up. When you supply your body with the energy it needs, you feel more satisfied and happy throughout the day. You're supplied with the essential nutrients that kick start your mind so you can start your day with a good attitude.

Eating a healthy breakfast of essential nutrients can help you improve your overall health, well-being, and even help you do better in school or work. It's worth it to get up a few minutes earlier and throw together a quick breakfast. You'll be provided with the energy to start your day off right.

Should You Eat Breakfast If You Want to Lose Weight? Here's What to Know

Written by Heather Cruickshank on February 11, 2019

There's a new study looking at eating breakfast and weight loss.

Experts say eating a nutritional breakfast is probably a good idea. Getty Images

In the past, some studies suggested that eating breakfast might help promote weight loss, while skipping a morning meal might lead to weight gain.

But according to a new review of researchTrusted Source published January in the BMJ, there's no strong evidence to support the idea that eating breakfast aids weight loss.

The authors of the review looked at data from 13 randomized controlled trials conducted over the past three decades, mostly in the United States and United Kingdom.

They found that people who ate breakfast tended to consume more calories per day than people who skipped it. On average, breakfast eaters ate 260 more calories in a day, meaning it's unlikely they ate significantly lighter at other meals even though they consumed extra calories in the morning.

The authors also found that people who ate breakfast tended to weigh slightly more than people who skipped it. On average, breakfast eaters were 0.44 kilograms (15.5 ounces) heavier.

But does this mean breakfast is "unhealthy"? Not exactly.

"Although eating breakfast regularly could have other important effects, such as improved concentration and attentiveness levels in childhood, caution is needed when recommending breakfast for weight loss in adults," the authors wrote.

The quality of evidence is low

According to the authors of the new review, more research is needed to examine the role breakfast might play in weight management.

The authors warned existing data on this topic is of limited quality.

For example, most of the clinical trials they assessed included small numbers of participants. Only two of the trials included more than 50 people.

The average length of the trials was also short. They were conducted over periods of 2 to 16 weeks, providing no evidence on the long-term effects of breakfast habits.

The results also varied from one trial to another. For example, eight trials found that breakfast eaters tended to consume more calories per day than breakfast skippers, but two trials found the opposite.

“As the authors suggest, the quality of the data is low and the results need to be interpreted with caution,” Rahaf Al Bochi, a registered dietitian and spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, told Healthline.

“Research suggests that the benefits of breakfast are beyond weight,” she continued. “At the end of the day, nutritional requirements are very individual. It is important that you seek a registered dietitian for personalized nutrition recommendations.”

Some breakfasts are healthier than others

After reading the new review, some experts have raised concerns about the contents of the breakfasts that people were given in clinical trials.

“When you look at the intervention groups, what they were given for breakfast is not generally what we would recommend people eat,” Liz Weinandy, a registered dietitian at Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center, told Healthline.

For example, participants in several trials were given processed cereals, such as Kellogg’s Rice Krispies or Frosted Flakes. In one study, they were given white bread with strawberry jam. These foods are high in refined carbohydrates and low in fiber and protein.

“I could see where this would add weight gain, because if you have a really high-carbohydrate breakfast, especially without fiber or protein, that makes people hungry again sooner,” Weinandy said.

“It makes your blood sugar go up fast, and your body secretes a lot of insulin to pull it back down, and then people get hungry again more quickly,” she explained.

Sharon Zarabi, a registered dietitian and bariatric program director at Lenox Hill Hospital, agrees.

“It’s not the breakfast, it’s what we’re eating for breakfast,” Zarabi said.

Breakfasts rich in fiber, protein, and healthy fats can help people feel full for longer, compared to meals high in refined carbohydrates, she says.

That’s why it’s not enough to count calories, she adds.

Breakfast can help people meet their nutritional needs

Eating breakfast isn't a sure-fire way to lose weight, but it might have other benefits.

Weinandy says it gives people a chance to get some of the essential vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients they need for optimum health.

"Skipping breakfast is almost seen as a missed opportunity for getting some of those nutrients that most Americans are not getting enough of, like potassium, calcium, and fiber," she said.

If people eat nutrient-rich foods later in the day, then skipping breakfast might not be a problem. But in her experience, many breakfast skippers reach for unhealthy snacks instead.

That's one of the reasons why Weinandy encourages many clients to start their day with breakfast. However, she thinks it's important to take people's individual needs and preferences into account.

"In general, I do recommend breakfast," she said, "but there are pockets of people that it may or may not make a difference with. I don't think we have enough information, one way or another."

No one-size-fits-all approach

Ultimately, there's no one-size-fits-all approach to healthy eating or weight management.

"I think everyone responds to different diets differently. What works for one person may not always work for another," Zarabi said.

"I think it's important to speak with the person, probe to learn what has worked for them in the past, and try to make things sustainable," she added.

For people who eat breakfast, the healthiest approach is to choose foods rich in nutrients and low in refined sugars and unhealthy fats.

“I would recommend that you choose a balanced breakfast that nourishes your body. Aim to include a source of protein, healthy fats, whole grains, and a vegetable or fruit,” Al Bochi said.

“For example, this can be an avocado and egg in a whole-wheat tortilla wrap, Greek yogurt with berries and nuts, oats with fruit and nut butter, or a protein bar. Limit breakfast foods that are processed and high in refined sugars,” she continued.

Eating nutritious foods throughout the rest of the day is also important for supporting not only weight management, but good overall health.

The bottom line

A new study finds there’s still not enough clear evidence that breakfast will help with weight loss.

But experts say eating a meal in the morning can be beneficial to your health in other ways. They point out that sticking with a balanced breakfast is likely a good choice, even if it doesn’t lead to a slimmer waistline.

Whole Grains are the Whole Package

These Natural Grains Pack a Nutritional Punch

Print

By Leanne Beattie and Becky Hand, Registered Dietitian

Health experts agree that we need to eat more whole grains for optimal health. For years, epidemiological studies have found health benefits in people who eat whole grains, including a lower risk of Type 2 diabetes, a decrease in heart disease and certain cancers, and less unwanted weight gain.

Furthermore, a recently released "experimental study" resulted in two papers published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition and more evidence that whole grains might be superheroes. In the eight-week, randomized trial, 81 subjects were assigned to a strictly controlled weight maintenance diet that included either whole grains or refined grains. In a comparison of the whole-grain diet versus a refined-grain diet, researchers found that participants in the former group absorbed 92 fewer calories, had greater fecal output and experienced a boost to their metabolism resulting in calories burning even while at rest. Researchers estimate that the amount of extra calories burned would be equivalent to a 20 to 30 minute walk and a possible five pounds lose annually.

Based on the same study and subjects, another group of researchers also determined that the results showed a favorable effect of the whole-grain diet in creating a healthy gut environment and more positive immune responses. The two combined make quite a case for whole grains, indeed.

In fact, the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that refined grains be replaced with whole grains, aiming for at least three servings daily for females and four servings for males. As you can see, there's no need to fear whole grains—they aren't the enemy. However, consumers are often perplexed by their unusual names, the cooking and preparation required, and how to serve them.

What's in a Whole Grain?

Each grain starts its life as a whole grain. A grain is considered "whole" when it contains all of its original parts—bran, germ and endosperm—in the same proportions as when the grain was in the field.

- The bran is the multi-layered outer covering of the kernel of grain that contains antioxidants, B vitamins and fiber. You may be familiar with wheat bran or oat bran sold at your grocery store.
- The germ is the "baby" of the kernel, which grows into a new plant. It contains many B vitamins, some protein, minerals and healthy fats.
- The endosperm is the inner part of the grain and is the food supply and energy for the young plant. As the largest portion of the seed, it contains starchy carbohydrates and proteins, as well as small amounts of vitamins and minerals.

When grains are processed and refined for breads, cereals, pastas and flours, the bran and germ are removed, leaving behind the white endosperm. During this process, grains become less nutritious, losing 25 percent of their original protein content and 17 other essential nutrients. True whole grains, on the other hand, are packed with antioxidants, healthy fats and fiber, plus vitamins and minerals such as B vitamins, vitamin E, folate, vitamin K, magnesium, potassium, iron and selenium.

Take some of the guesswork out of the grocery store by familiarizing yourself with exactly what makes up a whole grain and what does not.

Yes, I'm a whole grain. **I contain all three grain parts in the original proportions.**	***No, I'm not a whole grain.*** **I do not contain all three grain parts in the original proportions.**	***I am maybe a whole grain.*** **You'll have to investigate further to determine if I am a whole grain. See the clues below.**
Whole grain (name of grain) Whole wheat Whole (name of grain) Stone ground whole (name of grain) Brown rice Oats and oatmeal Whole (name of grain) flour	Enriched (name of grain) flour Enriched flour Degerminated corn meal (name of grain) bran (name of grain) germ	Wheat Wheat flour Durum wheat Organic (name of grain) flour Stone ground (name of grain) Multigrain

If you're still unsure, dive into the nutrition label:

- If the first ingredient listed contains the word "whole" or a "whole grain" (for example, whole-wheat flour or whole-rye oats), it is likely, though not guaranteed, that the food is mainly composed of a whole grain.
- If there are two grain ingredients and only the second ingredient is listed as a "whole" grain, the food may contain as little as one percent or as much as 49 percent whole grain. You have no way of knowing.

The clue finding gets even more difficult if there are several grain ingredients in a food item like a multi-grain bread. For example, consider if the list of ingredients shows wheat flour, whole wheat, whole oat flour, whole cornmeal and whole rye flour. In this example, there are four whole grains used and only one refined grain—the wheat flour. Yet, you have no way of knowing the percentage of each. The refined flour could be making up 90 percent or more of the total grains, and the whole grains less than 10 percent. Due to this type of confusion, the Whole Grains Council created their "stamp" to help consumers quickly identify true whole grains.

Today's Grains

The whole grains of today are actually as old as the hills. They have been a nourishing component for millions of people around the world. The grains below, **when consumed in a form that includes the bran, germ and endosperm**, are examples of generally accepted whole-grain foods and flours:

- Amaranth, which is actually a seed
- Arborio Rice
- Basmati Rice
- Brown Rice
- Buckwheat, which is actually a seed
- Bulgur
- Jasmine Rice
- Millet
- Whole Barley
- Quinoa
- Triticale
- Wheat Berries
- Wild Rice, which is actually a seed
- Popcorn
- Corn
- Farro
- Freekeh
- Oats

If you're still confused, you can further explore the expansive world of grains and how to read labels by visiting the Whole Grains Council encyclopedia tool.

Adding Whole Grains to Your Diet

The easiest way to increase the amount of whole grains you consume is to substitute some processed grain products with their whole-grain equivalent. This is as simple as having a slice of whole-grain toast in the morning instead of using white bread, or using whole-wheat flour in pancakes.

While at the grocery store, be extra careful reading food labels, too. Words such as multigrain, stone-ground cracked wheat or seven grain don't necessarily mean the product is made with whole grains. And color doesn't automatically signal whole grain either—some brown breads are simply white bread with added caramel coloring.

With a few simple tweaks to your diet, you can add a whole lot of whole grains to any healthy eating plan.

- Wake up with a bowl of cooked oats—steal-cut, old-fashioned, quick cooking or instant. They are all whole grains.
- Build an egg sandwich using a toasted, whole-grain English muffin.
- Create a lunchtime sandwich using whole-wheat bread or a whole-wheat pita pocket.
- Use your favorite jarred spaghetti sauce on whole-wheat spaghetti.
- Serve grilled chicken and sautéed veggies over instant brown rice with a dash of soy sauce.
- Snack on light microwave popcorn.
- Stir up a sensational soup using frozen mixed vegetables and whole-grain barley or instant brown rice.
- Toss together the ingredients in your favorite pasta salad using whole-wheat pasta or farro.

Experiment with a new recipe using whole grains.
Despite misinformation spewed by publicity seeking authors as well as bloggers searching for sensationalism, nothing really has changed. High-fiber, nutrient-rich, whole grains have been and are still one of the keys to good health. Now, we just have more evidence from well-controlled research studies to back it up.

Updated by Becky Hand, March 2017
Article created on: 3/9/2017

Good Fats vs. Bad Fats: Everything You Should Know About Fats and Heart Health

One type of fat protects your heart, the other puts you at risk for cardiovascular disease. It's wise to know the difference.

By Ashley WelchMedically Reviewed by Michael Cutler, DO, PhD
Last Updated: April 7, 2020

The word “fat” often has a negative connotation, but the body actually needs certain healthy fats to function properly. For example, fats are necessary to construct cell membranes, insulate nerves, and ensure that many vitamins, including A, D, E, and K, work the way they should.

“For many years all fat was vilified and was limited as much as possible by most people looking to lose weight,” says Kelly Kennedy, RD, a registered dietitian at Everyday Health. “But this is absolutely not necessary, and limiting fat too much can even pose risks to human health. Fats are an essential part of a healthy diet, and there are several healthy choices.”

There are numerous types of fat — some good for us and some not. Scientific research about the health risks and benefits of fats is constantly evolving. The current evidence and guidance suggest we should focus our diet around consuming healthy fats and avoiding unhealthy fats.

Types of Fats

Dietary fats fall into three categories:

- **Unsaturated fats** These good fats are the type of fat you should eat the most of as part of a heart-healthy diet. There are two types of unsaturated fats: monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. Pecans, hazelnuts, almonds, sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, olive oil, peanut oil, and canola oil have high concentrations of monounsaturated fats. Fish, flaxseeds, flaxseed oil, corn oil, soybean oil, and sunflower oil contain polyunsaturated fats. Omega-3 fatty acids — found in some types of fish, such as salmon and herring, and in plant products, such as soybean oil, canola oil, walnuts, and flaxseed — are a type of polyunsaturated fat that is thought to be particularly good for the heart.
- **Saturated fats** Animals are the primary source of saturated fats, with high levels found in beef, pork, and full-fat dairy products and medium levels in poultry and eggs. Some vegetable oils, such as palm oil, also contain a lot of saturated fat.
  Saturated fats are necessary for the body — but in small amounts. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that less than 10 percent of your daily calories should come from saturated fats, preferably from lean poultry and low-fat or fat-free dairy products. For people who consume 2,000 calories per day, only 20 grams at most should come from saturated fat.
- **Trans fats** These are the fats you may want most but shouldn’t have. Most unsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature. To make them solid, food manufacturers add extra hydrogen, making it a “hydrogenated,” or trans, fat. The highest levels of trans fats are found in baked goods, animal products, and margarine.

Effects of Non-Healthy Fats on the Heart

Trans fats are the worst type of fats for the heart, blood vessels, and overall body health. Consuming trans fats:

- Raises bad LDL levels of cholesterol and lowers good HDL levels of cholesterol
- Increases the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Contributes to insulin resistance and is associated with a higher risk of type 2 diabetes

In 2015, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) banned the use of partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs), the primary source of artificial trans fats, from processed foods. This policy led to a near elimination of artificial trans fats in the U.S. food supply by 2018.

But trans fats are not completely gone from foods, as they occur naturally in small amounts in meats and dairy products, as well as some edible oils.

Eating a meal high in saturated fats — say a large steak with potato salad loaded with eggs and mayo — can drive up total cholesterol and tip the balance to more LDL, or bad cholesterol. This in turn can cause blood vessels to narrow and prompt blockages to form in the arteries. Saturated fats also cause triglycerides (made from excess calories and stored in fat cells) to go up. High triglyceride levels increase the risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart problems.

The effects of saturated fats on the body has been the source of some controversy in recent years, as a handful of studies have questioned just how harmful saturated fats are. For example, a meta-analysis published in the *American Journal of Nutrition* concluded: “There is insufficient evidence from prospective epidemiologic studies to conclude that dietary saturated fat is associated with an increased risk of CHD [coronary heart disease], stroke, or CVD [cardiovascular disease].”

A highly publicized study published in 2014 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* determined that diets high in saturated fat do not raise the risk of heart disease.

But that controversial conclusion was met with criticism, and American nutritional guidelines still recommend limiting the amount of saturated fats consumed daily to no more than 10 percent of your daily calories. The American Heart Association takes it even further and suggests that saturated fat make up no more than 5 to 6 percent of your daily calories.

The overarching guidance is that limiting saturated fats and replacing them with good fats, especially polyunsaturated fats, is what improves cholesterol and lowers the risk of heart disease.

“There are always going to be studies on both sides of an argument, however, the current body of research suggests that saturated fat is not good for human health,” Kennedy says.

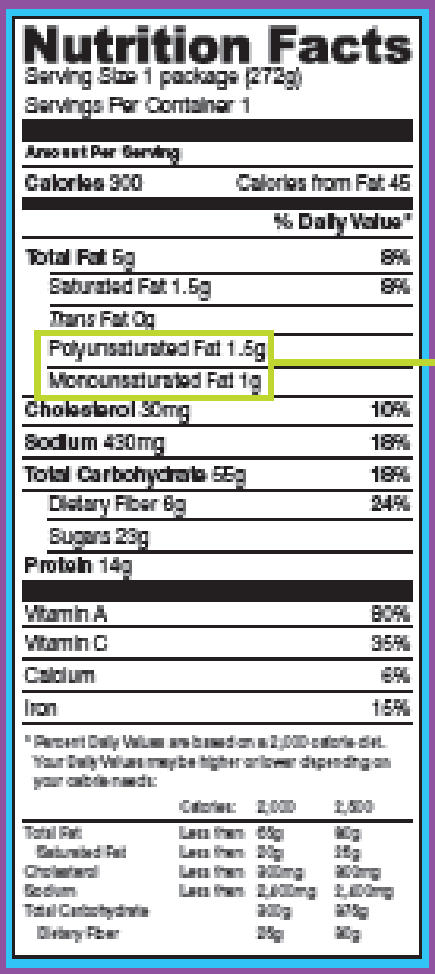
Replacing Bad Fats With Good Fats

Replacing some saturated fat from animal sources with healthy fat from plant sources can reduce LDL and triglyceride levels and your risk of cardiovascular disease.

A review published in June 2015 in *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* found that replacing saturated fats with polyunsaturated fats can lower your risk of heart disease.

Kennedy says there are easy ways to make these swaps. “For example, instead of cooking your food in butter, opt for olive oil instead,” she recommends. “Top a salad or sandwich with fresh avocado instead of bacon or cheese. Or choose peanut or almond butter to top whole-grain toast or a whole-wheat bagel, in place of butter or cream cheese.”

Monounsaturated and Polyunsaturated Fat



Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 package (272g)

Servings Per Container 1

Amount Per Serving

Calories 300 — Calories from Fat 45

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 5g	8%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
Trans Fat 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 1.5g	
Monounsaturated Fat 1g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 430mg	18%
Total Carbohydrate 55g	18%
Dietary Fiber 8g	24%
Sugars 23g	
Protein 14g	
Vitamin A	80%
Vitamin C	35%
Calcium	6%
Iron	15%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats can reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease when eaten in place of saturated fat.

What They Are

Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are found in higher proportions in plants and seafood and are usually liquid at room temperature. The exceptions are certain tropical plant oils, such as coconut oil, palm oil, and palm kernel oil (which are high in saturated fat) and partially hydrogenated oils (which contain *trans* fat).

Where They Are Found

Monounsaturated fats are found in a variety of foods, including:

- Avocados
- Mayonnaise and oil-based salad dressings
- Nuts (such as almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts, and pecans)
- Olives
- Seeds (such as pumpkin and sesame seeds)
- Soft margarine (liquid, spray, and tub)
- Vegetable oils (such as canola, olive, peanut, and safflower oils)

Polyunsaturated fats are found in a variety of foods, including:

- Fish (such as herring, mackerel, salmon, trout, and tuna)
- Mayonnaise and oil-based salad dressings
- Nuts (such as pine nuts and walnuts)
- Seeds (such as flax, pumpkin, sesame, and sunflower seeds)
- Soft margarine (liquid, spray, and tub)
- Vegetable oils (such as corn, cottonseed, soybean, and sunflower oils)

What They Do

- Like all dietary fats, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats provide calories and help the body absorb certain vitamins, cushion and insulate the body, and support many body processes.
- Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats contribute vitamin E to the diet.
- Polyunsaturated fat is a source of two essential fats. These fats are considered essential because they are required for normal body functioning, but they cannot be made by the body and must be obtained from food. Essential fats play a role in many body processes, including immune and nervous system function, blood clotting, and blood pressure regulation.

FDA

http://www.fda.gov/nutritioneducation

Health Facts

- When eaten *in place* of saturated fat, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats can lower the levels of total cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein (LDL or "bad") cholesterol in the blood — which, in turn, can **reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease.** Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in both men and women in the U.S.
- The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends consuming **less than 10% of your calories per day from saturated fat** by *replacing* saturated fat with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.
- Although monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats can have a beneficial effect on your health, they are still a concentrated source of calories. Therefore, they should be eaten *in place of* saturated fat (rather than added to the diet) while staying within recommended limits for calories and total dietary fat.

✓Action Steps

For Replacing Saturated Fat with Monounsaturated and Polyunsaturated Fats in Your Diet

Use the **Nutrition Facts Label** as your tool for replacing saturated fat with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. The Nutrition Facts Label on food and beverage packages shows the amount in grams (g) and the Percent Daily Value (%DV) of total fat and saturated fat in **one serving** of the food.

Food manufacturers may *voluntarily* list the amount in grams (g) per serving of monounsaturated fat and polyunsaturated fat on the Nutrition Facts Label (under Total Fat), but they are *required* to list monounsaturated fat and polyunsaturated fat if a statement is made on the package labeling about the health effects or the amount of monounsaturated fat or polyunsaturated fat (for example, "high" or "low") contained in the food.

- ☐ Cook and bake with liquid oils instead of solid fats (such as butter, lard, and shortening).
- ☐ Choose oils that are higher in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats (such as sunflower oil and olive oil), and avoid oils that are higher in saturated fat (such as coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils).
- ☐ Switch from stick margarine to soft margarine (liquid, spray, or tub).
- ☐ Try fish and plant sources of protein (such as soy products and unsalted nuts and seeds) in place of some meats and poultry.
- ☐ Sprinkle slivered nuts on salads instead of bacon bits, or snack on a small handful of unsalted nuts or seeds rather than chips or salty snack foods.
- ☐ Instead of using creamy salad dressings, make your own flavorful dressings with vinegar and oil (such as flaxseed, olive, or sesame oils).
- ☐ When eating out, ask which fats are being used to prepare your meal. You can also request to see nutrition information, which is available in many chain restaurants.

The truth about fats: the good, the bad, and the in-between

December 11, 2019

Avoid the trans fats, limit the saturated fats, and replace with essential polyunsaturated fats

Image: vasata/Getty Images

Why are trans fats bad for you, polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats good for you, and saturated fats somewhere in-between? For years, fat was a four-letter word. We were urged to banish it from our diets whenever possible. We switched to low-fat foods. But the shift didn't make us healthier, probably because we cut back on healthy fats as well as harmful ones.

You may wonder isn't fat bad for you, but your body needs some fat from food. It's a major source of energy. It helps you absorb some vitamins and minerals. Fat is needed to build cell membranes, the vital exterior of each cell, and the sheaths surrounding nerves. It is essential for blood clotting, muscle movement, and inflammation. For long-term health, some fats are better than others. Good fats include monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. Bad ones include industrial-made trans fats. Saturated fats fall somewhere in the middle.

All fats have a similar chemical structure: a chain of carbon atoms bonded to hydrogen atoms. What makes one fat different from another is the length and shape of the carbon chain and the number of hydrogen atoms connected to the carbon atoms. Seemingly slight differences in structure translate into crucial differences in form and function.

Bad trans fats

The worst type of dietary fat is the kind known as trans fat. It is a byproduct of a process called hydrogenation that is used to turn healthy oils into solids and to prevent them from becoming rancid.

Trans fats have no known health benefits and that there is no safe level of consumption. Therefore, they

Eating foods rich in trans fats increases the amount of harmful LDL cholesterol in the bloodstream and reduces the amount of beneficial HDL cholesterol. Trans fats create inflammation, which is linked to heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and other chronic conditions. They contribute to insulin resistance, which increases the risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Even small amounts of trans fats can harm health: for every 2% of calories from trans fat consumed daily, the risk of heart disease rises by 23%.

In-between saturated fats

Saturated fats are common in the American diet. They are solid at room temperature — think cooled bacon grease, but what is saturated fat? Common sources of saturated fat include red meat, whole milk and other whole-milk dairy foods, cheese, coconut oil, and many commercially prepared baked goods and other foods.

The word "saturated" here refers to the number of hydrogen atoms surrounding each carbon atom. The chain of carbon atoms holds as many hydrogen atoms as possible — it's saturated with hydrogens.

Is saturated fat bad for you? A diet rich in saturated fats can drive up total cholesterol, and tip the balance toward more harmful LDL cholesterol, which prompts blockages to form in arteries in the heart and elsewhere in the body. For that reason, most nutrition experts recommend limiting saturated fat to under 10% of calories a day.

A handful of recent reports have muddied the link between saturated fat and heart disease. One meta-analysis of 21 studies said that there was not enough evidence to conclude that saturated fat increases the risk of heart disease, but that replacing saturated fat with polyunsaturated fat may indeed reduce risk of heart disease.

Two other major studies narrowed the prescription slightly, concluding that replacing saturated fat with polyunsaturated fats like vegetable oils or high-fiber carbohydrates is the best bet for reducing the risk of heart disease, but replacing saturated fat with highly processed carbohydrates could do the opposite.

Good monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats

Good fats come mainly from vegetables, nuts, seeds, and fish. They differ from saturated fats by having fewer hydrogen atoms bonded to their carbon chains. Healthy fats are liquid at room temperature, not solid. There are two broad categories of beneficial fats: monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.

Monounsaturated fats. When you dip your bread in olive oil at an Italian restaurant, you're getting mostly monounsaturated fat. Monounsaturated fats have a single carbon-to-carbon double bond. The result is

Good sources of monounsaturated fats are olive oil, peanut oil, canola oil, avocados, and most nuts, as well as high-oleic safflower and sunflower oils.

The discovery that monounsaturated fat could be healthful came from the Seven Countries Study during the 1960s. It revealed that people in Greece and other parts of the Mediterranean region enjoyed a low rate of heart disease despite a high-fat diet. The main fat in their diet, though, was not the saturated animal fat common in countries with higher rates of heart disease.

It was olive oil, which contains mainly monounsaturated fat. This finding produced a surge of interest in olive oil and the "Mediterranean diet," a style of eating regarded as a healthful choice today.
Although there's no recommended daily intake of monounsaturated fats, the Institute of Medicine recommends using them as much as possible along with polyunsaturated fats to replace saturated and trans fats.

Polyunsaturated fats

When you pour liquid cooking oil into a pan, there's a good chance you're using polyunsaturated fat. Corn oil, sunflower oil, and safflower oil are common examples. Polyunsaturated fats are *essential* fats. That means they're required for normal body functions but your body can't make them. So, you must get them from food. Polyunsaturated fats are used to build cell membranes and the covering of nerves. They are needed for blood clotting, muscle movement, and inflammation.

A polyunsaturated fat has two or more double bonds in its carbon chain. There are two main types of polyunsaturated fats: omega-3 fatty acids and omega-6 fatty acids. The numbers refer to the distance between the beginning of the carbon chain and the first double bond. Both types offer health benefits.

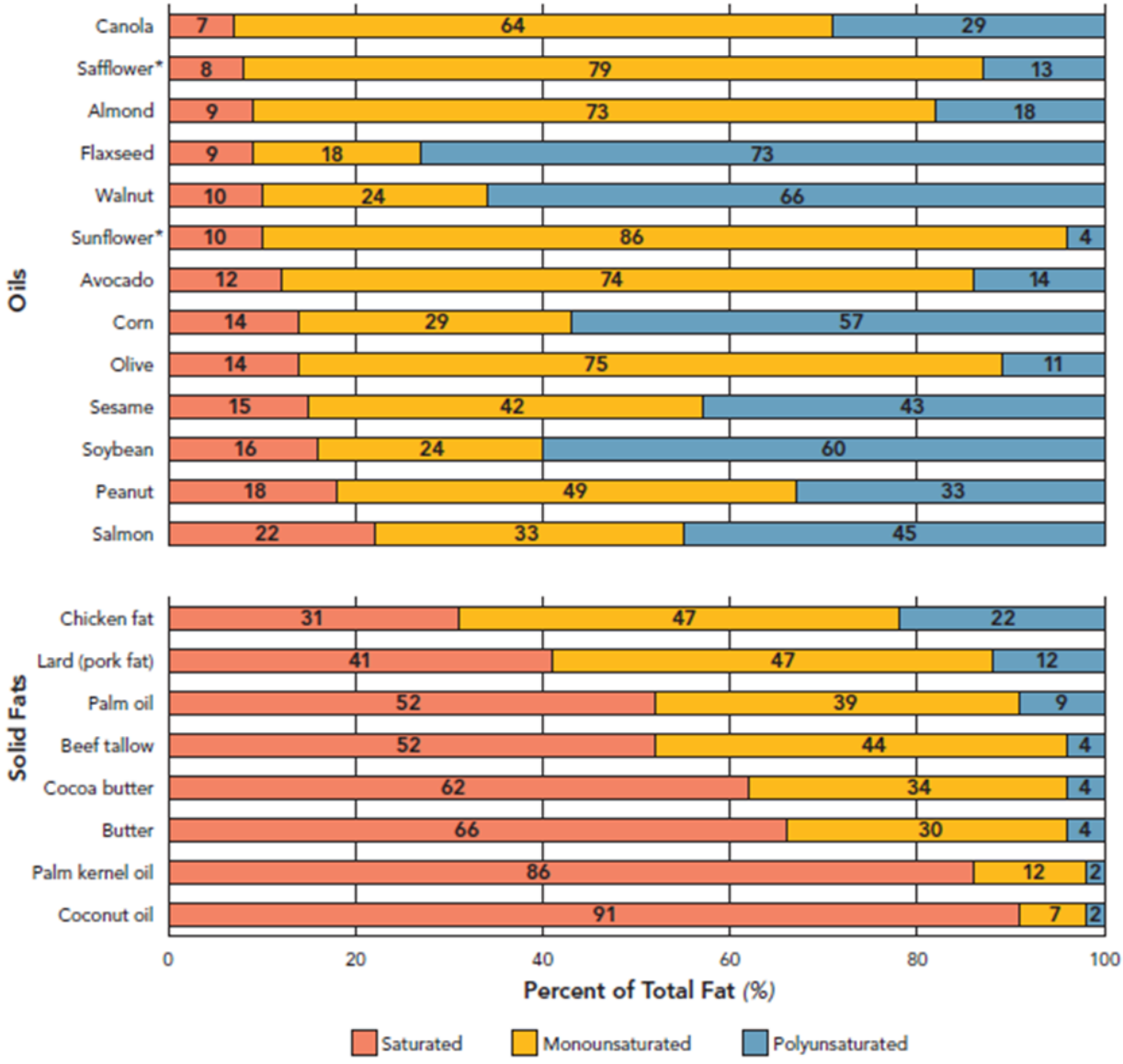
Eating polyunsaturated fats in place of saturated fats or highly refined carbohydrates reduces harmful LDL cholesterol and improves the cholesterol profile. It also lowers triglycerides.
Good sources of omega-3 fatty acids include fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel, and sardines, flaxseeds, walnuts, canola oil, and unhydrogenated soybean oil.

Omega-3 fatty acids may help prevent and even treat heart disease and stroke. In addition to reducing blood pressure, raising HDL, and lowering triglycerides, polyunsaturated fats may help prevent lethal heart rhythms from arising. Evidence also suggests they may help reduce the need for corticosteroid medications in people with rheumatoid arthritis. Studies linking omega-3s to a wide range of other health improvements, including reducing risk of dementia, are inconclusive, and some of them have major flaws, according to a systematic review of the evidence by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.

Omega-6 fatty acids have also been linked to protection against heart disease. Foods rich in linoleic acid and other omega-6 fatty acids include vegetable oils such as safflower, soybean, sunflower, walnut, and corn oils.

OIL in the FAMILY

All fats are a mix of saturated, monounsaturated, and polyunsaturated fatty acids (though people usually categorize each by the fatty acid that predominates). Odds are, you get mostly soybean oil in prepared foods (like salad dressings, mayonnaise, and margarine) and restaurant foods. So you'll probably end up with a good mix of unsaturated fats if you use canola oil and olive oil (when you want its flavor) for cooking.



*Sunflower seeds are higher in polyunsaturated fat and lower in monounsaturated fat than most sunflower oils. Some health food stores sell high-poly sunflower or safflower oils.

Note: The fatty acids in meats, nuts, chocolate, and other foods are similar to their respective oils, butters, etc., shown above.

Sources: USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference (Release 28), National Sunflower Association, Flax Council of Canada.

NutritionAction.com

Kitchen

Nutrition Facts:

Calories 188
Total Fat 6.2
Cholesterol 15mg
Total Carbohydrates 18.4g
Dietary Fiber 3.5g
Sugars 10.2
Protein 17g

Ingredients:

- 1 Scoop Vanilla Protein Powder
- 1 Peach- diced and pit removed
- 1TBS Sugar Free Powdered Coffee Creamer
- ¼ tsp Vanilla Extract
- 1 Cup Vanilla Unsweetened Almond Milk
- 8-10 Ice Cubes for desired consistency

Place in blender and blend until smooth.

Crock Pot Banana Bread Quinoa

Yields about 6 1/2 cup servings.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of quinoa (I used Bob's Red Mill)
- 1/2 cup of low-sugar cinnamon sugar cookie Coffee Mate Creamer
- 1/2 cup low-fat milk
- 1 cup water
- 1 1/2 banana (past ripe)
- 2 tablespoons chopped walnuts
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 1/2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions:

1. Mash the banana in a bowl and set aside. In another bowl, mix the brown sugar and walnuts together.
2. Pour quinoa, creamer (or light cream), milk, water, butter and vanilla into the crock pot. Add the mashed banana and stir to evenly distribute. Sprinkle the sugar and walnut mixture into the quinoa and stir to mix.
3. Cook on low for 4 – 6 hours, or until the quinoa is fully cooked. If you need to, add additional liquid or sugar to the mixture for taste.

Serve warm and garish with slices of banana!

Nutritional information per serving:

Calories: 260
Fat: 7 grams
Carbohydrates: 38 grams
Fiber: 2.5 grams
Protein: 5.5 grams

Cottage Cheese, Spinach, and Tomato Omelet

Nutrition Info
Calories: 345.6
Fat: 2.2g
Carbohydrates: 13.9g
Protein: 59.2g

Ingredients
1.5 cups of Egg Substitute
¾ cup of 1% Cottage Cheese
¼ cup of Raw Onions Chopped
½ cup Spinach - cooked, OR
1 cup Spinach Raw (if raw, make sure you heat it up in the pan before you start your omelet- make it nice and wilty!)
6 Cherry Tomatoes (diced)
Pam or Other Non-Stick Cooking Spray

Directions

Makes 1 HUGE and delicious Omelet!

Heat pan with good amount of cooking spray on burner at a high setting (I usually use between 6 and 8 on a scale of 1-10).

When cooking spray is sizzling, add in the 1.5 cup of egg substitute and the ¼ cup of raw chopped onions.

Make a traditional omelet - let the bottom of the omelet fry, occasionally lifting up the corners and tilting the liquid egg underneath to also cook.

When your omelet is close to perfection, or almost to the color of brown you like on the bottom, put ⅛ cup of Cottage Cheese (try not to get too much of the liquid), the ½ cup of Cooked Spinach, and the chopped tomatoes evenly on ½ of the omelet. While still in the pan, let it cook like this for another 1-2 minutes, softening and warming all the ingredients!

Next, flip the bare half of the omelet over onto the full side, creating that perfect half circle!!

Now you're done! Slide that bad boy onto a plate, top off with the remaining ¼ cup of Cottage Cheese, and you have a delicious, low fat, and amazing huge omelet all for your enjoyment! If I can do it, you can, believe me! <3

Number of Servings: 1

Cheesy, Crabby Crustless Quiche

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 50 minutes

Servings: 5

Ingredients:

2 cups Egg Beaters

½ cup skim milk

12 oz lump crab meat, drained

¾ cup reduced-fat cheddar cheese, shredded

1 large tomato, chopped

1 small onion, minced

½ cup red bell pepper, sliced

1 ½ cups fresh spinach, chopped

1 Tbs reduced fat parmesan cheese, grated

½ tsp garlic powder

½ tsp black pepper

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl except parmesan cheese.

Pour mixture into deep casserole dish (quiche will rise during baking) coated with cooking spray.

Bake for 30 minutes.

Sprinkle quiche with parmesan and bake for an additional 20 minutes, until quiche has puffed, is firm, and golden brown.

Remove quiche from oven and cool slightly before cutting.

Serving suggestions:

Serve with a mixed green salad with a lite vinaigrette.

Note:

Substitute your favorite veggies.

Nutritional Information per serving:

150 calories; 1.5g fat; 26g protein; 8g carbohydrate; 1g fiber; 4.5g sugar; 810mg sodium.

20 Minute Honey Garlic Shrimp

Yield: serves 4
Prep Time: 15 minutes
Total Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup honey
- 1/4 cup low sodium soy sauce
- 1 Tablespoon minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh ginger
- 1 lb medium uncooked shrimp, peeled & deveined[1]

2 teaspoons olive oil

optional: chopped green onion for garnish

Directions:

1. Whisk the honey, soy sauce, garlic, and ginger together in a medium bowl.
2. Place shrimp in a large zipped-top bag or tupperware. Pour 1/2 of the marinade mixture on top, give it all a shake or stir, then allow shrimp to marinate in the refrigerator for 15 minutes or for up to 8-12 hours. Cover and refrigerate the rest of the marinade for step 3. (Time-saving tip: while the shrimp is marinating, steamed broccoli or some cauliflower rice.)
3. Heat olive oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Place shrimp in the skillet. (Discard used marinade[2].) Cook shrimp on one side until pink-- about 45 seconds-- then flip shrimp over. Pour in remaining marinade and cook it all until shrimp is cooked through, about 1 minute more.
4. Serve shrimp with cooked marinade sauce and a garnish of green onion. The sauce is excellent on cauliflower rice and steamed veggies on the side.

Helpful Hints:

- Our office is located in the new outpatient surgery center located in **Building 1200 on the 2nd floor in EHT**.
- Due to our move, we have a new phone number. To reach us, **please call (609) 833-9833**.
- Remember to keep **Hydrated**!!! 64 ounces of non-carbonated sugar free fluids, **water is *Best!***
- Reminder to eat your **PROTEIN *FIRST!*** *(*65-80 grams a day)
- ***Don't forget to follow-up…*** schedule your appointments with the dietitian and your physician. The first year we would like to see you every 3 months and then on a yearly basis.
- Preparing for ***SURGERY*** ?
    1. Don't Miss your ***Monthly*** weight check! It may lead to delays in surgery if your insurance requires 4 or 6 consecutive month weight checks.
    2. Do not ***GAIN*** any weight prior to surgery. Your insurance company may deny your approval for surgery.

Have a Happy Summer!!!!

AtlantiCare
REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER
The Center for Surgical Weight Loss & Wellness

2021 Bariatric Support Group Schedule

Online TEAMS Meetings

Call Access Center for Registration and Web Access: 609-569-1000

Monday 5:30 – 6:15 PM

Date	Topic
July 19	* Eating Breakfast to Start the Day
August 9	* Healthy Snacking & Staying Activity
September 13	* Guest Speaker: Marcel
October 11	* Label Reading
November 1	* Stocking a Healthy Kitchen
December 6	* Self-Monitoring/ Self-Accountability

Monday 10:30– 11:30 AM

July 26	* Good Fats vs Bad Fats
August 23	* Meal Planning
September 27	* Importance of Sleep to Health
October 25	* Portion Control
November 15	* Goal Setting for the Holidays
December	* Happy Holiday! No SG