

dietary fats

WHAT IS DIETARY FAT?

Dietary fat, the kind of fat you get from food, is important for your health and the normal growth and development of your body. Dietary fat has many different functions in your body, which include:

- providing long lasting energy
- helping you feel full after eating
- forming part of your brain and nervous system
- forming cell membranes for every cell in your body
- carrying vitamins throughout your body
- providing two essential fatty acids, called linoleic acid and linolenic acid, that your body cannot make by itself

There are four main types of fats found in food:

1. Monounsaturated Fat
2. Polyunsaturated Fat
3. Saturated Fat
4. Trans Fat

MONOUNSATURATED FAT is considered the most "heart healthy" type of fat. Monounsaturated fats decrease LDL ("bad") cholesterol and increase HDL ("healthy") cholesterol. Good sources of monounsaturated fat include:

- avocados
- almonds
- cashews
- olive oil
- peanut butter
- sunflower oil

POLYUNSATURATED FAT is also a "heart healthy" type of fat. There are two essential fatty acids (linolenic and linoleic) that your body uses to make chemicals that control blood pressure, blood clotting, and your immune system response. Linolenic fatty acids are also called omega-3 fats, and they are known to

have many health benefits. Good sources of polyunsaturated fat include:

- canola oil
- mackerel
- walnuts
- flaxseeds
- soybeans

Good sources of **OMEGA-3 FATS** include:

- green leafy vegetables
- halibut
- tofu
- legumes
- tuna

SATURATED FAT is most often found in foods that originally come from animals. Saturated fats are known to increase LDL ("bad") cholesterol. Saturated fats are normally hard at room temperature. Common sources of saturated fat include:

- butter
- eggs
- red meat
- cheese
- lard

TRANS FAT is formed when liquid oils are hydrogenated and made into solid fats. Trans fats are artificially produced by food manufacturers. Originally thought to be the healthier option to replace saturated fats, recent medical findings have discovered that trans fats are not healthier. Trans fats increase LDL ("bad") cholesterol and decrease HDL ("healthy") cholesterol. Sources of trans fat include:

- packaged cookies
- packaged muffins
- shortening
- margarine

NUTRITION TIP

Try to increase your intake of monounsaturated and omega-3 fats, while decreasing saturated and trans fats. About 30% of the energy we eat in the form of food and fluids should come from healthy fat. It is a good idea to balance your meals with carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fat.

Epicurean Group does not use hydrogenated oils or trans fats in our cooking. We only use healthful canola oil in fryers and cook with only canola and olive oil.

*Children's Hospital Boston 2008
Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2008
US Department of Health and Human Services
Epicurean Group 2010*