American Heart Association
Learn and Live

FACE THE Fats

MEET THE FATS

Some are bad, some are better.

Fats 101

Fats are essential to give your body energy and to support cell growth. They also help protect your organs and help keep your body warm. Fats help your body absorb some nutrients and produce important hormones, too. Your body definitely needs fat – but not as much fat as most people eat.

These are the major fats in foods: saturated fats and *trans* fats (the "bad" fats), and monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats (the "better" fats). The different fats have different characteristics. They can also have different effects on heart health.

	BAD FATS		BETTER FATS	
	Saturated Fats	***Trans* Fats**	**Monounsaturated Fats**	**Polyunsaturated Fats**
Commonly Found in These Foods	• (Mainly from animals) Beef, lamb, pork, poultry with the skin, beef fat, lard, cream, butter, cheese, other whole- or reduced-fat dairy products • (Some from plants) Palm, palm kernel and coconut oils	• Baked goods – pastries, biscuits, muffins, cakes, pie crusts, doughnuts and cookies • Fried foods – French fries, fried chicken, breaded chicken nuggets and breaded fish • Snack foods – popcorn, crackers. • Traditional stick margarine and vegetable shortening	• Vegetable oils – olive, canola, peanut and sesame • Avocados and olives • Many nuts and seeds – almonds and peanuts/ peanut butter	• **High in Omega-6 and Omega-3 (ALA)** vegetable oils – soybean, corn and safflower Many nuts and seeds – walnuts and sunflower seeds • **High in Omega-3 (EPA and DHA)** Fatty fish – salmon, tuna, mackerel, herring and trout
Effect on Heart Health	• Raise bad cholesterol level • Foods high in saturated fats may also be high in cholesterol • Increase risk of heart disease	• Raise bad cholesterol • May lower good cholesterol • Increase risk of heart disease	• Reduce bad cholesterol • May lower risk of heart disease	• Reduce bad cholesterol • May lower risk of heart disease
Characteristics	• Carbon atoms saturated with hydrogen atoms • Solid at room temperature	• Created in an industrial process by adding hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils • Solid at room temperature • Contained in "Partially hydrogenated oils"	• Have one double-bonded (unsaturated) carbon atom • Liquid at room temperature, but turn solid when chilled	• More than one double-bonded (unsaturated) carbon atom • Liquid at room temperature and when chilled
Daily Limit	• Less than 7% of total daily calories • If you eat 2,000 calories a day, less than 140 calories (15 grams) can be from saturated fats	• Less than 1% of total daily calories • If you eat 2,000 calories a day, less than 20 calories (2 grams) can be from *trans* fats	• Total fats should be about 25% to 35% of total daily calories • Eat foods with monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats instead of saturated or *trans* fats	• Total fats should be about 25% to 35% of total daily calories • Eat foods with monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats instead of saturated or *trans* fats

FAQs

Will eating "good" fats instead of "bad" fats help me lose weight?

No, all fats are equally high in calories relative to carbohydrate and protein. Regardless of the source, if you eat more calories than you need, you will gain weight. Replace the "bad" fats (saturated and *trans* fats) with the "better" fats (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats) to reduce your risk of heart disease. To avoid weight gain, control the total amount of calories you eat.

Are all foods labeled "*trans* fat-free" good for me?

Not necessarily. Foods labeled "*trans* fat-free" may still be high in saturated fats and/or low in nutrients. Consider sweets, fatty and salty foods as treats you eat only once in a while. Remember to check the fat content so you can stay within our recommended limits for total, saturated and *trans* fats.

the better FATS Sisters™

Be kinder to your heart.

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Live Fat-Sensibly

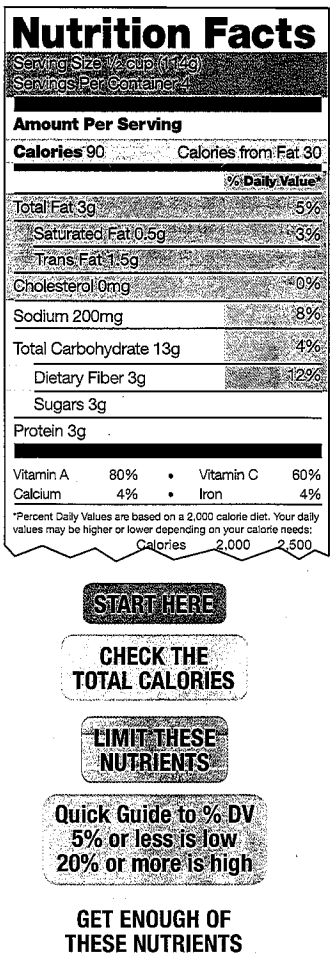
Follow a healthy dietary pattern – one that balances the amount of calories you consume with the amount of calories you burn. Your diet should emphasize a variety of fruits, vegetables, and grain products, especially whole grains; fat-free and low-fat dairy products, legumes, poultry, and lean meats; and eat fish, preferably oily fish, at least twice a week. In addition, limit your consumption of beverages and foods with added sugars and snack foods, and choose and prepare foods with little or no salt. Choosing smaller portion sizes is also very important to control your total calories and weight.

Reading Foods Labels

Learning how to read and understand Nutrition Facts labels can help you make healthier choices.

As an example, for a 2,000-calorie diet:

- 40 calories per serving is considered low;
- 100 calories per serving is considered moderate; and
- 400 calories or more per serving is considered high.



Key Words for Reading Food Labels

The table below provides some of the most commonly used health claims defined by the US Food and Drug Administration that can appear on food packages.

If a food claims to be ...	It means that one serving of the product contains ...
Fat	
Fat free	Less than 0.5 grams of fat
Low fat	3 grams of fat or less
Reduced fat or less fat	At least 25 percent less fat than the regular product
Low in saturated fat	1 gram of saturated fat or less, with not more than 15 percent of the calories coming from saturated fat
Lean	Less than 10 grams of fat, 4 grams of saturated fat and 95 milligrams of cholesterol
Extra lean	Less than 5 grams of fat, 2 grams of saturated fat and 95 milligrams of cholesterol
Light (lite)	At least one-third fewer calories or no more than half the fat of the regular product, or no more than half the sodium of the regular product
Cholesterol	
Cholesterol free	Less than 2 milligrams of cholesterol and 2 grams (or less) of saturated fat
Low cholesterol	20 or fewer milligrams of cholesterol and 2 grams or less of saturated fat
Reduced cholesterol	At least 25 percent less cholesterol than the regular product and 2 grams or less of saturated fat

Eating In

Cooking and preparing meals at home allows for more control over the healthfulness of foods.

- Start smart with low-fat cookbooks or recipes.
- Choose liquid vegetable oils or nonfat cooking sprays, and avoid solid fats and shortenings.
- Instead of frying foods, which adds unwanted fat and calories, use cooking styles that add little or no fat to food – stir-fry, roast, grill, boil, poach, sauté and steam.

When your recipe calls for ...	Use this instead ...
Whole milk (1 cup)	1 cup fat-free or low-fat milk, plus one tablespoon of liquid vegetable oil
Heavy cream (1 cup)	1 cup evaporated skim milk or 1/2 cup low-fat yogurt and 1/2 cup plain low-fat unsalted cottage cheese
Sour cream	Low-fat unsalted cottage cheese plus low-fat or fat-free yogurt; or just use fat-free sour cream, which is also available
Cream cheese	4 tablespoons soft margarine (low in saturated fat and 0 grams *trans* fat) blended with 1 cup dry, unsalted low-fat cottage cheese; add a small amount of fat-free milk if needed
Butter (1 tablespoon)	1 tablespoon soft margarine (low in saturated fat and 0 grams *trans* fat) or 3/4 tablespoon liquid vegetable oil
Egg (1)	2 egg whites; or choose a commercially made, cholesterol-free egg substitute (1/4 cup)
Unsweetened baking chocolate (1 ounce)	3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder or carob powder plus 1 tablespoon vegetable oil or soft margarine; since carob is sweeter than cocoa, reduce the sugar in the recipe by 25%

Eating Out

Many restaurants offer delicious choices low in saturated fats, *trans* fats and cholesterol.

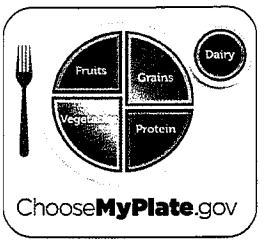
- Request smaller portions or share entrees. You'll save money and calories.
- Look for foods that are steamed, broiled, baked, grilled, poached or roasted.
- Ask for salad dressings, sauces and gravies to be served on the side.

Instead of ...	Try ...
Cream-based soups	Broth-based soups with lots of vegetables
Quiche and salad	Soup and salad
Buffalo chicken wings	Peel-and-eat shrimp
Bread, muffins, croissants	Melba toast, pita bread, whole-grain rolls
Fried chicken	Grilled chicken and a side salad
Cheeseburgers	Grilled chicken sandwiches, sliced meat sandwiches or even a regular hamburger with lettuce, tomato and onion
Chicken fried steak	Veggie burger
French fries	Baked potato, brown rice, steamed vegetables
Creamy coleslaw	Sautéed vegetables, steamed vegetables or tossed salad
Hot fudge sundae or ice cream	Nonfat yogurt, sherbet or fruit ice
Milkshake	Fruit juice, low-fat or fat-free milk, or diet soft drink

10 tips
Nutrition Education Series

focus on fruits

10 tips to help you eat more fruits



Eating fruit provides health benefits. People who eat more vegetables and fruits as part of an overall healthy diet are likely to have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. Fruits provide nutrients vital for health, such as potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin C, and folate (folic acid). Most fruits are naturally low in fat, sodium, and calories. None have cholesterol. Any fruit or 100% fruit juice counts as a part of the Fruit Group. Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, or pureed.

1 keep visible reminders

Keep a bowl of whole fruit on the table, counter, or in the refrigerator.

2 think about taste

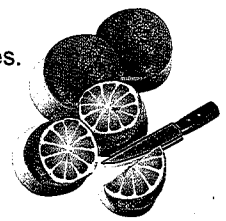
Buy fresh fruits in season when they may be less expensive and at their peak flavor. Add fruits to sweeten a recipe.

3 think about variety

Buy fruits that are dried, frozen, and canned (in water or 100% juice) as well as fresh, so that you always have a supply on hand.

4 don't forget the fiber

Make most of your choices whole or cut-up fruit, rather than juice, for the benefits that dietary fiber provides.



5 be a good role model

Set a good example for children by eating fruit every day with meals or as snacks.

6 include fruit at breakfast

At breakfast, top your cereal with bananas, peaches, or strawberries; add blueberries to pancakes; drink 100% orange or grapefruit juice. Or, try a fruit mixed with fat-free or low-fat yogurt.

7 try fruit at lunch

At lunch, pack a tangerine, banana, or grapes to eat, or choose fruits from a salad bar. Individual containers of fruits like peaches or applesauce are easy and convenient.

8 experiment with fruit at dinner, too

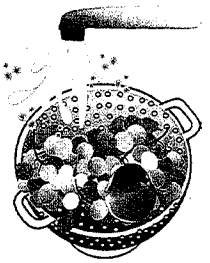
At dinner, add crushed pineapple to coleslaw, or include orange sections, dried cranberries, or grapes in a tossed salad.

9 snack on fruits

Dried fruits make great snacks. They are easy to carry and store well.

10 keep fruits safe

Rinse fruits before preparing or eating them. Under clean, running water, rub fruits briskly to remove dirt and surface microorganisms. After rinsing, dry with a clean towel.



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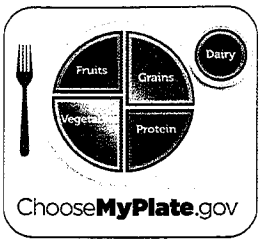
DG TipSheet No. 3
June 2011

10 tips
Nutrition Education Series

make half your grains whole

10 tips to help you eat whole grains



Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley, or another cereal grain is a grain product. Bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits are examples. Grains are divided into two subgroups, **whole grains** and **refined grains**. Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel—the bran, germ, and endosperm. People who eat whole grains as part of a healthy diet have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases.

1 make simple switches

To make half your grains whole grains, substitute a whole-grain product for a refined-grain product. For example, eat 100% whole-wheat bread or bagels instead of white bread or bagels, or brown rice instead of white rice.

2 whole grains can be healthy snacks

Popcorn, a whole grain, can be a healthy snack. Make it with little or no added salt or butter. Also, try 100% whole-wheat or rye crackers.

3 save some time

Cook extra bulgur or barley when you have time. Freeze half to heat and serve later as a quick side dish.

4 mix it up with whole grains

Use whole grains in mixed dishes, such as barley in vegetable soups or stews and bulgur wheat in casseroles or stir-fries. Try a quinoa salad or pilaf.

5 try whole-wheat versions

For a change, try brown rice or whole-wheat pasta. Try brown rice stuffing in baked green peppers or tomatoes, and whole-wheat macaroni in macaroni and cheese.

6 bake up some whole-grain goodness

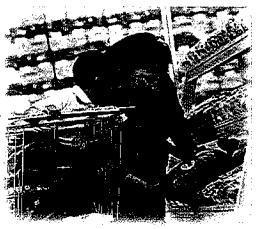
Experiment by substituting buckwheat, millet, or oat flour for up to half of the flour in pancake, waffle, muffin, or other flour-based recipes. They may need a bit more leavening in order to rise.

7 be a good role model for children

Set a good example for children by serving and eating whole grains every day with meals or as snacks.

8 check the label for fiber

Use the Nutrition Facts label to check the fiber content of whole-grain foods. Good sources of fiber contain 10% to 19% of the Daily Value; excellent sources contain 20% or more.



9 know what to look for on the ingredients list

Read the ingredients list and choose products that name a whole-grain ingredient ***first*** on the list. Look for "whole wheat," "brown rice," "bulgur," "buckwheat," "oatmeal," "whole-grain cornmeal," "whole oats," "whole rye," or "wild rice."

10 be a smart shopper

The color of a food is not an indication that it is a whole-grain food. Foods labeled as "multi-grain," "stone-ground," "100% wheat," "cracked wheat," "seven-grain," or "bran" are usually not 100% whole-grain products, and may not contain **any** whole grain.

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DG TipSheet No. 4
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10 tips
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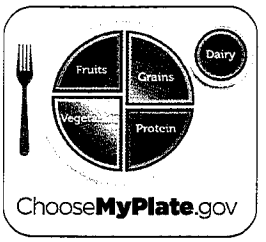
with protein foods, variety is key



10 tips for choosing protein

Protein foods include both animal (meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs) and plant (beans, peas, soy products, nuts, and seeds) sources. We all need protein—but most Americans eat enough, and some eat more than they need. How much is enough? Most people, ages 9 and older, should eat 5 to 7 ounces* of protein foods each day.

1 vary your protein food choices

Eat a variety of foods from the Protein Foods Group each week. Experiment with main dishes made with beans or peas, nuts, soy, and seafood.

2 choose seafood twice a week

Eat seafood in place of meat or poultry twice a week. Select a variety of seafood—include some that are higher in oils and low in mercury, such as salmon, trout, and herring.

3 make meat and poultry lean or low fat

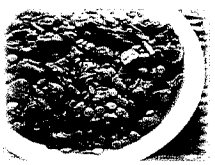
Choose lean or low-fat cuts of meat like round or sirloin and ground beef that is at least 90% lean. Trim or drain fat from meat and remove poultry skin.

4 have an egg

One egg a day, on average, doesn't increase risk for heart disease, so make eggs part of your weekly choices. Only the egg yolk contains cholesterol and saturated fat, so have as many egg whites as you want.

5 eat plant protein foods more often

Try beans and peas (kidney, pinto, black, or white beans; split peas; chickpeas; hummus), soy products (tofu, tempeh, veggie burgers), nuts, and seeds. They are naturally low in saturated fat and high in fiber.



6 nuts and seeds

Choose unsalted nuts or seeds as a snack, on salads, or in main dishes to replace meat or poultry. Nuts and seeds are a concentrated source of calories, so eat small portions to keep calories in check.

7 keep it tasty and healthy

Try grilling, broiling, roasting, or baking—they don't add extra fat. Some lean meats need slow, moist cooking to be tender—try a slow cooker for them. Avoid breading meat or poultry, which adds calories.

8 make a healthy sandwich

Choose turkey, roast beef, canned tuna or salmon, or peanut butter for sandwiches. Many deli meats, such as regular bologna or salami, are high in fat and sodium—make them occasional treats only.

9 think small when it comes to meat portions

Get the flavor you crave but in a smaller portion. Make or order a smaller burger or a "petite" size steak.

10 check the sodium

Check the Nutrition Facts label to limit sodium. Salt is added to many canned foods—including beans and meats. Many processed meats—such as ham, sausage, and hot dogs—are high in sodium. Some fresh chicken, turkey, and pork are brined in a salt solution for flavor and tenderness.

* What counts as an ounce of protein foods? 1 ounce lean meat, poultry, or seafood; 1 egg; ¼ cup cooked beans or peas; ½ ounce nuts or seeds; or 1 tablespoon peanut butter.

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DG TipSheet No. 6
June 2011

10 tips
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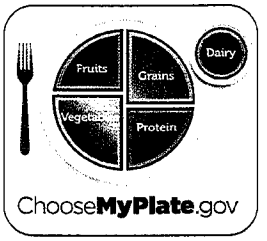
got your dairy today?

10 tips to help you eat and drink more fat-free or low-fat dairy foods



The Dairy Group includes milk, yogurt, cheese, and fortified soymilk. They provide calcium, vitamin D, potassium, protein, and other nutrients needed for good health throughout life. Choices should be low-fat or fat-free—to cut calories and saturated fat. How much is needed? Older children, teens, and adults need 3 cups* a day, while children 4 to 8 years old need 2½ cups, and children 2 to 3 years old need 2 cups.

1 "skim" the fat

Drink fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk. If you currently drink whole milk, gradually switch to lower fat versions. This change cuts calories but doesn't reduce calcium or other essential nutrients.

2 boost potassium and vitamin D, and cut sodium

Choose fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt more often than cheese. Milk and yogurt have more potassium and less sodium than most cheeses. Also, almost all milk and many yogurts are fortified with vitamin D.

3 top off your meals

Use fat-free or low-fat milk on cereal and oatmeal. Top fruit salads and baked potatoes with low-fat yogurt instead of higher fat toppings such as sour cream.

4 choose cheeses with less fat

Many cheeses are high in saturated fat. Look for "reduced-fat" or "low-fat" on the label. Try different brands or types to find the one that you like.

5 what about cream cheese?

Regular cream cheese, cream, and butter ***are not*** part of the dairy food group. They are high in saturated fat and have little or no calcium.

* What counts as a cup in the Dairy Group? 1 cup of milk or yogurt, 1½ ounces of natural cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese.

6 ingredient switches

When recipes such as dips call for sour cream, substitute plain yogurt. Use fat-free evaporated milk instead of cream, and try ricotta cheese as a substitute for cream cheese.

7 choose sweet dairy foods with care

Flavored milks, fruit yogurts, frozen yogurt, and puddings can contain a lot of added sugars. These added sugars are empty calories. You need the nutrients in dairy foods—not these empty calories.

8 caffeinating?

If so, get your calcium along with your morning caffeine boost. Make or order coffee, a latte, or cappuccino with fat-free or low-fat milk.

9 can't drink milk?

If you are lactose intolerant, try lactose-free milk, drink smaller amounts of milk at a time, or try soymilk (soy beverage). Check the Nutrition Facts label to be sure your soymilk has about 300 mg of calcium. Calcium in some leafy greens is well absorbed, but eating several cups each day to meet calcium needs may be unrealistic.

10 take care of yourself and your family

Parents who drink milk and eat dairy foods show their kids that it is important. Dairy foods are especially important to build the growing bones of kids and teens. Routinely include low-fat or fat-free dairy foods with meals and snacks—for everyone's benefit.

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DG TipSheet No. 5
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10 tips
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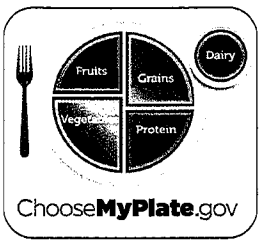
add more vegetables to your day



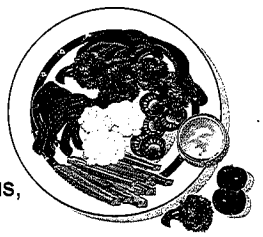
10 tips to help you eat more vegetables

It's easy to eat more vegetables! Eating vegetables is important because they provide vitamins and minerals and most are low in calories. To fit more vegetables in your meals, follow these simple tips. It is easier than you may think.

1 discover fast ways to cook

Cook fresh or frozen vegetables in the microwave for a quick-and-easy dish to add to any meal. Steam green beans, carrots, or broccoli in a bowl with a small amount of water in the microwave for a quick side dish.

2 be ahead of the game



Cut up a batch of bell peppers, carrots, or broccoli. Pre-package them to use when time is limited. You can enjoy them on a salad, with hummus, or in a veggie wrap.

3 choose vegetables rich in color

Brighten your plate with vegetables that are red, orange, or dark green. They are full of vitamins and minerals. Try acorn squash, cherry tomatoes, sweet potatoes, or collard greens. They not only taste great but also are good for you, too.

4 check the freezer aisle

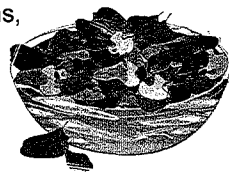
Frozen vegetables are quick and easy to use and are just as nutritious as fresh veggies. Try adding frozen corn, peas, green beans, spinach, or sugar snap peas to some of your favorite dishes or eat as a side dish.

5 stock up on veggies

Canned vegetables are a great addition to any meal, so keep on hand canned tomatoes, kidney beans, garbanzo beans, mushrooms, and beets. Select those labeled as "reduced sodium," "low sodium," or "no salt added."

6 make your garden salad glow with color

Brighten your salad by using colorful vegetables such as black beans, sliced red bell peppers, shredded radishes, chopped red cabbage, or watercress. Your salad will not only look good but taste good, too.



7 sip on some vegetable soup

Heat it and eat it. Try tomato, butternut squash, or garden vegetable soup. Look for reduced- or low-sodium soups.

8 while you're out

If dinner is away from home, no need to worry. When ordering, ask for an extra side of vegetables or side salad instead of the typical fried side dish.

9 savor the flavor of seasonal vegetables

Buy vegetables that are in season for maximum flavor at a lower cost. Check your local supermarket specials for the best-in-season buys. Or visit your local farmer's market.

10 try something new

You never know what you may like. Choose a new vegetable—add it to your recipe or look up how to fix it online.

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