



FATS

Fats provide the highest concentration of energy of all nutrients. Among many important roles, fat moves vitamins throughout the body and is the largest reserve of stored energy available for activity. In addition, fats surround the vital internal organs and serve as shock absorbers, and also insulate the body from extreme temperatures. Some vitamins, such as vitamins A, D, E and K are only soluble in fat, which means they are found in foods that contain fat and are best absorbed from these foods. A final, important, role of fat is that it helps determine satiety – that is, feeling full after a meal.

There are many different kinds of fats: saturated, monounsaturated, and polyunsaturated. These refer to the amount of hydrogen in each fatty acid chain. So, a saturated fat is saturated with hydrogen atoms, while a polyunsaturated fat is a fatty acid with two or more points of unsaturation. Saturation may also be determined by the level of “hardness” of a fat. For instance, butter is a saturated fat and olive oil is a monounsaturated fat. Our bodies need all of these fats in varying degrees.

The good fats:

- For cooking, you want to use healthy fats, such as: Olive oil, organic butter, ghee, coconut oil, unrefined sesame oil.
- For salads, flaxseed and nut oils are good oils to use.
- Nuts and seeds are high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.
- Avocado is a super-healthy fat. Avocados are high in monounsaturated fat – specifically oleic acid, an Omega 9 fat found in high amounts in olive oil and macadamia nut oil and many nuts. Monounsaturated fats have been shown to lower cholesterol.

The fats to avoid:

- Corn and Soybean oils – corn and soybean oils are too high in Omega 6 fatty acids (as are safflower, sunflower oils). In addition, corn and soybeans in the US are full of pesticides genetically modified.
- Refined polyunsaturated fats, such as sunflower and sunflower oils are very high in Omega 6 fatty acids and are often rancid and carcinogenic because they are processed at high heat.
- Transfats are also very unhealthy. On packages, they read as Partially or Fully Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil.

New research is showing that the cause of many inflammatory diseases (diabetes, heart disease, stroke, among others) is the imbalance between Omega 3 fatty acids and Omega 6 fatty acids – both of which are polyunsaturated fats - and we are not getting enough Omega 3s. Omega 3 fatty acids make cell membranes more fluid so they can communicate with one another; help in developing the brain; are anti-inflammatory and support circulation. Omega 3 fatty acids can be found in: fish, flax seeds, walnuts and leafy green vegetables.

Further Reading: [The Queen of Fats: Why Omega 3s Were Removed from the Western Diet and What We Can do to Replace Them](#), by Susan Allport
Dr. Andrew Weil’s Guide to Heart Health, Dr. Andrew Weil