

- Nutrition

FAT ISN'T ALL THAT BAD

o fat, low-fat, zero-fat. It is common to see these labels on various food products, but is eliminating fat really that good for you? It depends.

There are four types of fat: saturated, monounsaturated, polyunsaturated, and trans fat. These can either be healthy or harmful for the body. So what's the real skinny on fat?

The truth is, fat is essential to the body as it provides a source energy (after carbohydrates) and supports other bodily functions, such as helping absorb nutrients properly (like fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K), helps regulate your body temperature, protects other organs from sudden pressure, act as protein messengers, builds cell membranes, helps in blood clotting



SKINVESTING
DR. KAYCEE REYES

body). Omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids are examples of polyunsaturated fats. Olive oil, canola oil, and sesame oil are examples of monounsaturated fats. Vegetable oils, nuts, salmon, and tuna are high in both monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.

Bad fat

On the other hand, saturated and trans fat, also called "harmful fats" or "bad fats," do the opposite as it raises LDL cholesterol levels; thus, it also increases the risk of stroke, coronary artery disease and other cardiovascular diseases, and the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. Saturated fat is more solid in form and usually comes from animals, such as red meat and poultry. Trans fat is also naturally available in small amounts in dairy

and trans fat, it is still not that easy to eat "clean" all the time. With all the sweets, deep fried food, and processed meats that some of us happen to eat often, how much saturated and trans fat should children and adults consume in a day?

According to the Cleveland Clinic, healthy adults must only consume saturated fat that does not exceed 10 percent of total calories consumed in a day, or at a maximum of 22 grams/day for



an adult in a 2000 calorie diet/day. If LDL cholesterol levels are higher than normal, saturated fat intake should be no more than seven percent of total calories consumed. For trans fat, it is best to avoid it completely, says the Cleveland Clinic. That also means disregarding product ingredients that include "partially hydrogenated oils" and even those labeled as "trans-fat free" (that may still contain traces of it). For children, especially at ages two to five years, it is best to avoid consuming both, or to teach them to choose food with less or reduced saturated fat or trans fat, according to healthychildren.org. It is not healthy to eliminate fat from children's diet, as it is important for their growth and development. But still, choosing healthy from harmful fat is important. Beyond five years, they should learn to choose and consume healthy fats more than harmful ones, like opting for low-fat milk, fish, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables rather than deep fried foods and processed meats.

Fat can be tricky. If you understand how fat works in the body, however, you can get around to eating fat and gaining its health benefits too. If you are reducing fat, or trying a new diet, please get your physician's or dietitian's consent before proceeding, so as to lose weight properly. Every individual has specific nutrient requirements, and diets may yield different results for different people. Nevertheless, cutting out the harmful fat and replacing them with healthy ones, being more mindful of labels and product ingredients, and watching your caloric intake overall are an important step in taking control of fats and your overall health.

The truth is fat is needed by the body. After carbohydrates, it is an essential source of energy and it supports such bodily functions as the proper absorption of nutrients.

and muscle movement, and triggers chemical reactions that support the immune system, the reproductive system, and other metabolic processes.

Good fat

In particular, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, also called "healthy fats" or "good fats," are the types of fat that provide the maximum benefit for the body. They both are liquid in room temperature; the only difference is the structure. Both can lower LDL cholesterol levels (low-density lipoproteins or bad cholesterol, where high amounts can lead to cholesterol buildup) and the risk of cardiovascular disease. At the same time, they increase HDL cholesterol (high-density lipoproteins or good cholesterol, as it transports cholesterol to the liver where it is expelled from the

products and beef. But the more harmful ones are found in industrially produced "hydrogenated oils," and these are usually added to food to achieve a certain taste, texture, or to prolong its shelf life. Unfortunately, like saturated fat, it lowers HDL and raises LDL. There are different sources of saturated and trans fat, from animal-based foods such as dairy and cheese, processed meats like hotdogs, sausages, and chicken skin, plant-based such as palm oil, and manufactured goods such as deep-fried food, fatty food, and other sweets such as cakes and pastries.

How much fat do we need?

Let's face it. While physicians and health practitioners advise substituting monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats with food that contains saturated

