

**- Nutrition****Facts about fats**

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Fats have a terrible reputation, often described as the dietary villain responsible for weight gain and heart disease. But the story is not exactly what it appears. Understanding which fats are harmful, which are beneficial, and ways of incorporating them into a healthy diet can help one make smarter choices.

**FACT:** Fat is essential component of a balanced diet. Dietary fat supplies energy, supports absorption of fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E, K), helps build cell membranes, and produces hormones. Eliminating fat entirely impairs health and can leave you feeling unsatisfied, which may lead to overeating other foods. The key is type and amount as different fats affect the body differently.

**FACT:** Low-fat processed foods often replace fat with sugar or refined carbs to preserve taste, which can worsen metabolic health. Whole foods with natural fats (nuts, seeds, avocados, oily fish) are nutrient-dense and help with satiety. A balanced approach, focusing on unsaturated fats and limiting trans fats and excessive saturated fat is more important than going after 'low-fat' labels.

**FACT:** Saturated fats raise LDL (bad) cholesterol in many people, which is associated with increased heart disease risk. However, their impact varies depending on the food source and what replaces them in the diet. Replacing saturated fats with unsaturated fats (especially polyunsaturated fats) without caring for the quantity of the latter used will not lower cardiovascular risk. Also replacing them with refined carbs will not help. Moderation and context matter.

Ghee and butter are both mostly saturated fat but differ slightly. Ghee (clarified butter) has had milk solids removed, raising its smoke point and making it shelf-stable.

Many cultures use ghee for flavour and ritual, and it's rich in fat-soluble vitamins. Butter contains water and milk proteins and provides small amounts of beneficial nutrients like vitamin A and butyrate.

**Fact:** Occasional use of ghee or butter can fit into a healthy diet, especially when used to flavour dishes rather than as the main cooking medium. For people with high LDL cholesterol or existing heart disease, limiting intake is important. and as stated As stated by Cleveland clinic, US, that potential compounds that ghee contains are not significant to bring any health improvement. Hence, moderation is the key.

Unsaturated fats, which includes, monounsaturated (olive, avocado) and polyunsaturated (soybean, sunflower, flaxseed, and omega-3 rich fish oils) are generally heart-protective. Extra virgin olive oil, a staple of the Mediterranean diet, is linked to lower heart disease risk due to its monounsaturated fat and antioxidants. Omega-3 fats from fatty fish reduce inflammation and benefit heart and brain health.

**FACT:** Not all oils are equal for cooking. Oils high in polyunsaturated fats can oxidise at high heat; use them for dressings or low-heat cooking. Oils with higher smoke points (refined avocado, light olive oil, ghee) are better for high-heat cooking. No one oil has all the health benefits that one may be looking for, hence keep changing the oil and use specific oil for specific preparation.

Industrial trans fats (partially hydrogenated oils) are harmful and raise heart disease risk significantly. Many countries have restricted or banned them; check labels and avoid products listing 'partially hydrogenated' oils. Packaged fried foods with long shelf life are mostly high in trans fats. Moreover, using the same oil repeatedly for cooking or frying purpose can increase its trans-fat content.

Prioritise unsaturated fats (olive, avocado, nuts, seeds, fatty fish).

Use ghee/butter sparingly, especially if having cholesterol-related issues. Avoid trans fats, limit highly processed foods high in saturated fat. Not all fats are bad. Choosing the right types, combined with a balanced diet, supports health and enjoyment of food. Focus on whole foods and balance rather than demonising a single nutrient.