

# FAT



## What does it do in the body?

- Fat is an essential part of a healthy, balanced diet. Some fats found in food are a source of essential fatty acids, which the body can't make itself. The vitamins A, D, E, and K can't be absorbed without the presence of fat in the diet.
- The cells use fat as an energy source and it is the most abundant energy source in the human body.
- Fats are also essential for brain function and for hormone production.

## What foods contain fat?

Fat is found in many foods that we consume such as meat, fish, eggs, dairy products, nuts, and seeds. Fats are also found in avocado, olives, and oils. There are minimal amounts of fat found in most vegetables (other than avocados and olives), fruits, and grains.



## How much fat do you need?

Fat recommendations do vary from person to person. It is recommended to get at least 10% of the diet as fat, although this is extremely low and most people would benefit from closer to 20-30% of the diet as fat. Some diets, including the ketogenic diet, have fat intakes as much as 70-80% of total calories. Individuals that would benefit from an intake closer to 20-30% of intake includes most athletes, kids and teenagers (due to needs for growth and development), active individuals, and individuals wanting to maintain weight (due to the satiating effect of fats). Lower fat diets may be appropriate for individuals with a significant risk of heart disease. Higher fat diets may be appropriate for certain medical conditions.

## Not all fats are created equal

**Saturated fats:** These fats are found mostly in animal based foods such as meat, eggs, and dairy. Coconut oil is considered a plant based source of saturated fat. Although some saturated fats are needed in the diet to help promote hormone production, it is important to eat less of this type of fat and more of the mono- and poly- unsaturated fats. Saturated fats are solid at room temperature and considered a saturated fat because their structure. They are saturated with hydrogen atoms and lack double bonds.

**Unsaturated fats:** These fats are found in mostly plant based foods such as nuts, seeds, avocados, and olives. Fish, especially fatty fish such as salmon, are a great source of polyunsaturated fats. Oils, which are liquid at room temperature are unsaturated fats. It is important to get most of the fats in the diet from this form of fat and to try to get this mostly from foods. Unsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature and are not saturated with hydrogen due to the presence of double bonds in their structure.

**Food sources of saturated fats:** Fatty cuts of meat including beef, pork, and lamb. Full fat dairy products, butter, lard, egg yolks, tropical oils (palm or coconut oil), dark meat chicken or turkey.

**Food sources of unsaturated fats:**

**Monounsaturated fats:** Olives and olive oils, avocados, sunflower seeds, nuts, peanut butter, and sesame oil.

**Polyunsaturated fats:** Walnuts, fatty fish, flaxseeds and flax oil. nuts, and soybean oil.

\*The fats found in fish, omega-3, are extremely heart healthy and considered anti-inflammatory

## **15 ways to get more fat in the diet**

- 1) Eat the entire egg, including the yolk
- 2) Snack on nuts and seeds. A portion of nuts or seeds is about 1/4 cup or a small handful.
- 3) Choose full fat dairy products such as yogurt made with 2% or whole milk
- 4) Eat fatty fish such as salmon at least one a week
- 5) Add avocados to salads, sandwiches, smoothies, wraps, or tacos.
- 6) Pair fruit with peanut butter. This makes a delicious snack.
- 7) Top salads and stir fry with sunflower seeds. peanuts, cashews, or pumpkin seeds for an added crunch.
- 8) Add walnuts to oatmeal for a delicious breakfast
- 8) Snack on trail mix with an assortment of nuts
- 9) Add olives to pizza, salads, or pasta dishes.
- 10) Cook with a little oil. Use sesame oil, peanut oil, or sunflower oil for lower temp cooking and consider using coconut oil for higher temp cooking.
- 11) Add a drizzle of olive oil to salads, pasta, or steamed vegetables.
- 12) Add a teaspoon of butter to your toast on occasion or top your toast with a nut butter
- 13) Try smoked salmon or canned salmon as a good protein and fat option on salads, bagels, or sandwiches
- 14) Try adding coconut flakes to cereals and oatmeal for a delicious coconut flavor
- 15) Top your salad with cheese or have a snack of cheese and crackers

