

Types of Fats

Read this fact sheet to learn about 4 different types of fats, how they affect the body, and sources of each!



Monounsaturated Fats

- Monounsaturated fatty acids have one double bond in their structure. They are liquid at room temperature.
- Monounsaturated fats found in plants may lower bad cholesterol, raise good cholesterol, and control blood sugar levels.
- These can be found in plant sources such as nuts and avocados, and vegetable oils like olive, canola, and sunflower oils.

Replacing solid saturated fats like butter with liquid plant oils during cooking is highly recommended for good health.



Polyunsaturated Fats

- The two categories of polyunsaturated fats are omega-6 fatty acids and omega-3 fatty acids.
- These fats may lower triglyceride levels in the blood and protect against blood vessel diseases.
- Sources of both categories include: fish, walnuts, chia seeds, flaxseed, soybean oil, peanut oil, and canola oil.

Polyunsaturated fats are considered “essential” and are key for proper brain development and function.



Saturated Fats

- Saturated fatty acids do not have double bonds in their structure. They are generally solid at room temperature.
- Saturated fats tend to raise levels of cholesterol in the blood, and the risk of heart and blood vessel disease.
- These fats are concentrated in meat and dairy products. They can also be found in oils such as coconut, palm, and palm kernel.

Limit consumption to less than 10% of total calories per day.



Trans Fats

- Trans fatty acids are the product of hydrogenating oils, a process that converts liquid fat to solid fat, prolonging shelf life.
- Trans fats have been found to raise bad cholesterol, lower good cholesterol, and increase cardiovascular disease.
- Trans fats are primarily found in processed foods such as margarines, cakes, cookies, and fast foods.

Foods high in trans fats should be consumed as little as possible, without compromising the nutritional adequacy of the diet.