

## GOOD FATS, BAD FATS

Fats are a much-misunderstood food source. Good fats are absolutely essential for our bodies and our health. They are your body's raw material for all of your hormones, including the ones that help you lose fat. Your brain is composed primarily of fat. The walls of your arteries and veins are composed primarily of fat. The insulation for your nerves is made of fat. And the walls of every cell in your body are made of fat. Without some types of fat, we die. That is why some fats are known as "essential fatty acids".

The problem is, most of us eat too much fat, and we don't eat the right kinds. Fats contain 9 calories per gram, whereas proteins and carbs contain only 4 calories per gram. So the calories can add up pretty quickly!

Healthy fats will be oils, and will have a high ratio of omega-3 fatty acids to omega-6 fatty acids. Omega-3 fats have a strong anti-inflammatory effect in our bodies, whereas omega-6 fats have a strong inflammatory effect in our bodies. And most of the health problems Americans suffer with, such as plaque buildup in the arteries, high blood pressure, and arthritis, are directly related to chronic low-grade inflammation.

Good sources of fat are wild-caught fish and fish oils, olive oil (extra-virgin, first cold-pressed), flaxseed oil, avocados, natural peanut and nut butters, raw nuts, seeds, and products made from seeds, such as tahini. Omega-3 eggs are a good way to get more omega-3s in your diet. They cost more, but are a smart choice. For cooking at low heat, olive oil is the best choice. For higher heat, a good choice is unprocessed canola oil.

Less desirable fats would include animal and dairy fats. Because domestic animals are grain-fed, their fat is primarily composed of omega-6 fatty acids. The same holds true for farm-raised fish (sorry).

The worst kinds of fats include highly processed fats and oils comprised of trans-fatty acids. Some examples would include shortening, most margarines, cooking oils, any food that's been deep-fat fried, and most cookies and pastries. These oils have been subjected to extremely high pressure and temperature; and are now in a form (the "trans" form) that is not found anywhere in nature.

When they make up a large percentage of your fat intake, your body has no choice but to use them for many critical components and functions of your body, with very serious long-term consequences for your health. They are a major cause of cardiovascular disease. They cause serious disruption of normal cell wall permeability and your ability to correctly process the "instructions" of the thousands of enzymes and hormones that direct our body's functions.

One of the first outward signs of trans-fatty acid toxicity is a compromised immune system. Children are particularly vulnerable. Children eating a diet high in trans-fatty acids, and low in vitamins and minerals (deep-fat fried meats, french fries, sodas, sweets and pastries, etc.) will constantly be sick or "not feeling well". You wouldn't put heating

oil in your gas tank and expect your car to run normally. Don't feed your body these foods and expect it to work normally either! *And especially don't feed your children these foods*, even if they "like" them.

It is one thing to eat unhealthy foods yourself. It is quite another to feed them to your children. They are innocents, and are depending on you to make wise food decisions for them. And the eating habits you instill in them now are the ones they will tend to keep throughout their lives.

So in summary, fats are not necessarily bad. Just try to be more aware of the *types* and *quantity* of the fats you eat. Your body will thank you!