

# FATS AND YOUR HEALTH

### WHAT ARE FATS ?

Fats and oils are found in foods of both plant and animal origin. Fats include oils which are liquid at room temperature - like olive oil or canola oil - and fats that are firm or solid at room temperature - like lard or butter. Fats and oils are made up of components called fatty acids. Some fatty acids can be made by the body but some cannot and these are known as “essential fatty acids” because we have to get them from the food we eat. These essential fatty acids are Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids.

### WHAT DO FATS DO ?

- > Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids are needed for normal growth and development and for the normal functioning of the brain and nervous system. They are used in the production of hormones that help regulate blood pressure, blood clotting, blood fats, inflammation and the immune system.<sup>1-6</sup>
- > All fats act as insulators for the body.
- > Fat helps to form protective padding around vital organs such as the heart, liver and kidneys.
- > Fat is a concentrated source of energy (kilojoules).
- > Fats are the carriers of the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K.

### WHAT TYPES OF FAT ARE FOUND IN FOOD?

There are three different types of fat found in food: “saturated”, “polyunsaturated”, and “monounsaturated”. They differ in their chemical structure and vary in the way they affect the body.

Each of these fats can be found in animal and plant foods, although animal fat is usually saturated, while plant (or vegetable) fat is usually unsaturated. Palm oil is an exception to this rule, as it is mainly saturated fat. Foods often contain a mixture of polyunsaturated, monounsaturated and saturated fats. A fat or oil is referred to as saturated, monounsaturated or polyunsaturated depending on which type of fat is present in the largest amounts. For example, canola oil contains approximately 7% saturated fat, 30% polyunsaturated fat (a mixture of Omega-3 and Omega-6) and 63% monounsaturated fat. It is therefore referred to as a monounsaturated oil.

### WHICH FOODS ARE RICHEST IN ESSENTIAL FATTY ACIDS?

Foods rich in Omega-3 fatty acids include: oily fish, walnuts, canola oil and eggs.  
Foods rich in Omega-6 fatty acids include: meat, safflower oil, sunflower oil and pumpkin seeds.

### HOW MUCH FAT DO YOU NEED ?

On The amount of fat a person needs depends on their age, sex, body size and composition, activity levels, family history and health status. There is strong evidence to suggest that Australians need to reduce the amount of fat in their diets. The Australian Dietary Guidelines recommend that, we should ideally eat a diet low in fat, and particularly low in saturated fat.<sup>7</sup> The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) recommends that less than 30 percent of our total energy (kilojoules) should come from fat with less than 10 percent of energy coming from saturated fat.<sup>8</sup>



*Good nutrition is part of the Nestlé heritage*

*Here at Nestlé we have a dedicated team of dietitians and nutritionists helping people enjoy healthy foods and the benefits of a healthier lifestyle.*

Visit [www.nestle.nutrition.com](http://www.nestle.nutrition.com) today.

Receive a FREE copy of our “Get Out! Get Active! Get Healthy!” booklet for kids.  
<http://www.nestle.com.au/Fun/GetOutGetActive>



The official AIS Survival Cook Books, each feature a superb collection of recipes perfect for busy families who want healthy and tasty food  
<http://www.nestle.com.au/Recipes/Survival>



### TIPS FOR EATING A BALANCED, LOW-FAT DIET

A balanced diet consists of fresh vegetables, fruit, cereals, legumes, grains, bread and pasta and moderate amounts of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats and oils. Eat small quantities of lean meats and chicken, and try to include fish two to three times per week as they are a good source of Omega-3 fatty acids, as are eggs. New research suggests that, on average, two large eggs provide 71-127% of the adequate intake (AI) for men and women respectively.

### WHY DO WE NEED TO EAT LESS FAT ?

Our bodies need fat but many Australians<sup>8</sup> consume foods that contain too much fat, especially too much saturated fat. This can lead directly or indirectly to a number of serious health problems including:

- > Coronary heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure<sup>10-13</sup>
- > Weight gain leading to being overweight or obese. This is strongly associated with ill health especially when the fat is located around the waist.
- > Non-insulin dependent diabetes
- > Some types of cancers<sup>14-17</sup>

Fatty foods can be replaced with delicious and healthy alternatives, such as fruits, vegetables, breads, legumes, seeds and cereals.

### TIPS FOR CUTTING DOWN ON FAT

- > When buying packaged food, read the label and choose foods with less than 10% fat (less than 10g per 100g)
- > Make an effort to use less spreads or use low-fat alternatives on breads and crispbreads.
- > Use vegetable oil based margarines, which are much lower in saturated fat than butter.
- > When cooking use a non-stick pan or lightly spray the pan with oil. When a recipe calls for 'browning', water or wine can be used instead of fat.
- > Grill, steam, poach, microwave or dry bake food.
- > Place meat on a rack when grilling, roasting or baking to drain away the fat.
- > Limit meat to approximately 65-100 grams per day; trim away visible fat and remove the skin from chicken before cooking.
- > Use fresh meats rather than sausages and sandwich meats such as salami, strassburg and kabana, which are particularly high in fat and salt.
  - > Eat fish often. Choose fresh fillets rather than frozen types that have already been fried. When buying canned fish choose the varieties that are canned in spring water.
  - > Use low-fat and reduced fat dairy products. (Full fat choices for children under 5).
  - > Use low-fat yogurt on baked potatoes and no oil salad dressings on salads.
  - > Use less meat and more legumes (dried peas, beans and lentils) in stews, casseroles and soups.
  - > Let home-made stews, casseroles and soups cool in the fridge so fat solidifies on the surface and then remove it before reheating.
  - > Avoid hidden fats by limiting foods that are coated in batter or crumbs and snack foods such as pastries, cakes, biscuits and fatty, savoury foods such as potato chips, wherever possible.



Over 400 delicious recipes to choose from. Visit our website : [www.nestle.com.au/Recipes](http://www.nestle.com.au/Recipes) to find your new favourite.



The AIS 'A Winning Diet' is a FREE booklet to help you perform at your best <http://www.nestle.com.au/SportsNutrition/Winning>



Nestlé has always maintained a commitment to advances in nutrition and is continuing this through its partnership with the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) and the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS)

### References:

1. GISSI-Prevenzione Investigators. Dietary supplementation with n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids and vitamin E after myocardial infarction: results of the GISSI-Prevenzione trial. Gruppo Italiano per lo Studio della Sopravvivenza nell'Infarto miocardico. *Lancet* 1999; 354:447-55.
2. Gudbjarnason S, Benediktsdottir VE, Skuladottir G: Effects of n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids on coronary heart disease. *Bibliotheca Nutritio et Dieta* 1989; 43:1-12.
3. Dyerberg J, Eskesen DC, Andersen PW, Astrup A, Buemann B, Christensen JH, Clausen P, Rasmussen BF, Schmidt EB, Tholstrup T, Toft E, Toubro S, Stender S. Effects of trans- and n-3 unsaturated fatty acids on cardiovascular risk markers in healthy males. An 8 weeks dietary intervention study. *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 2004; 58:1062-70.
4. Durrington PN, Bhatnagar D, Mackness MI, Morgan J, Julier K, Khan MA, France M. An omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acid concentrate administered for one year decreased triglycerides in simvastatin treated patients with coronary heart disease and persisting hypertriglyceridaemia. *Heart* 2001; 85:544-8.
5. Cleland LG, James MJ, Proudman SM. The role of fish oils in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. *Drugs* 2003; 63:845-53.
6. Volker D, Fitzgerald P, Major G, Garg M. Efficacy of fish oil concentrate in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. *Journal of Rheumatology* 2000; 27:2343-6.
7. Australian Dietary Guidelines. [http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/\\_files/n31.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/_files/n31.pdf)
8. Department of Health and Ageing; National Health and Medical Research Council: Nutrient Reference Values for Australia and New Zealand including Recommended Dietary Intakes. Commonwealth of Australia 2006.
9. Blue Moon Research and Planning Pty Ltd. Eggs - 2006 Usage and Attitudes.2007. As mentioned in "The Good Egg - Summer 2008" by the Egg Nutrition Advisory Group (ENAG).
10. National Heart Foundation of Australia. A review of the relationship between dietary fat and cardiovascular disease. *Aust J Nutr Diet* 1999; 56 (Suppl): S2-S22.
11. Stampfer MJ, Hu FB, Manson JE, et al. Primary prevention in coronary heart disease in women through diet and lifestyle. *New Engl J Med* 2000; 343: 16-22.
12. Hu FB, Rimm EB, Stampfer MJ, et al. Prospective study of major dietary patterns and risk of heart disease in men. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2000; 72: 912-921.
13. Nestel PJ. Saturated and trans fatty acids and coronary heart disease. *Eur Heart J* 1999; 1 (suppl S): S19-S23.
14. Zock PL, Katan MB. Linoleic acid intake and cancer risk: a review and meta-analysis. *Am J Clin Nutr* 1998; 68: 142-153.
15. Schulz M, Hoffmann K, Weikert C, Nöthlings U, Schulze MB, Boeing H. Identification of dietary pattern characterized by high-fat food choices associated with increased risk of breast cancer: the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC)-Potsdam Study. Department of Epidemiology, German Institute of Human Nutrition, Potsdam-Rehbrücke, Arthur-Scheunert-Allee 114-116, Nuthetal 14558, Germany.
16. Woutersen RA, Appel MJ, van Garderen-Hoetmer A, Wijnands MV (1999) Dietary fat and carcinogenesis. *Mutat Res* 443<sup>1-2</sup>:111-127
17. Willett WC (2000) Diet and cancer. *Oncologist* 5<sup>5</sup>:393-404



Over 400 delicious recipes to choose from. Visit our website : [www.nestle.com.au/Recipes](http://www.nestle.com.au/Recipes) to find your new favourite.



.....

The AIS 'A Winning Diet' is a FREE booklet to help you perform at your best <http://www.nestle.com.au/SportsNutrition/Winning>



.....

Nestlé has always maintained a commitment to advances in nutrition and is continuing this through its partnership with the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) and the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS)

**This fact sheet contains general information. Please consult your healthcare professional for specific advice for your personal situation.**