

Sources of Dietary Fat

Heart-healthy eating for people living with diabetes

Some types of fat are better for your heart's health than other types. This handout describes different kinds of fats and offers tips to help you make heart-healthy food choices.

Fats, Blood Glucose, and Your Health

Fats do not raise your blood glucose level like carbohydrates, but they are not “free” foods. Fatty foods take longer for your body to break down after a meal than low-fat foods. If you eat a meal with lots of fat, your blood glucose level may take longer to return to your target range.

Your body needs fat, but eating too much fat may change your body in unhealthy ways. It can also cause you to gain too much weight.

Use These Fats More Often

Monounsaturated and **polyunsaturated fats** are both healthy for your heart. But, use them in moderation.

Sources of Monounsaturated Fats

- Oils: olive, peanut, canola
- Avocado and guacamole
- Olives
- Nuts: almonds, cashews, mixed nuts, peanuts, and pecans
- All-natural butters made from peanuts, cashews, or almonds. These are made without hydrogenated fats (see page 2). They have oil on the top.



Olive oil is one source of healthy fat.

Sources of Polyunsaturated Fats

- Oils: safflower, corn, cottonseed, soybean, and sunflower
- Margarine made with the above liquid oils and labeled “trans-free”
- Salad dressing and mayonnaise made from the above liquid oils
- Pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds

Omega-3 fatty acids are also sources of polyunsaturated fats. They are very healthy for your heart. Eat these 2 to 3 times a week.

Sources of Omega-3 Fatty Acids

- Fish such as salmon, tuna, halibut, red snapper, cod, herring, mackerel, oysters, scallops, and sardines
- Walnuts and walnut oil
- Ground flaxseed, flaxseed oil, hemp seeds, and chia seeds
- Canola oil

Use these Fats Less Often

Saturated fats and **hydrogenated (trans) fats** are not good for heart health. They can increase cholesterol levels. Animal sources of saturated fats also contain cholesterol.

When liquid fat such as oil is made into a solid fat, like stick margarine, it is called *hydrogenation*. Hydrogenated fats are often called *trans fats*. Try **not** to eat hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated fats.

Sources of Saturated Fats

- Butter, shortening, and stick margarine
- Cheese, cream, and whole milk
- Coconut oil, cocoa butter, and palm kernel oil
- Meat fat and poultry skin

Sources of Hydrogenated (Trans) Fats

- Shortening and stick margarine
- Foods made with hydrogenated fats such as crackers, store-bought cookies and cakes, most peanut butters, doughnuts, French fries, microwave or movie popcorn, and most potato and tortilla chips

Tips

- Soft margarine in a tub is better for you than stick margarine. Look for **olive or avocado oil** as the first ingredient on the nutrition label.
- Eat chicken and turkey without the skin and trim fat from red meat. Eat fried foods less often.
- Choose low-fat or nonfat milk and yogurt.
- Nuts are a good source of healthy fat, if eaten in moderation.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

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