

# Fat and Saturated Fat

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The facts on fat have changed and we now understand the importance of this macro nutrient

Our bodies need a small amount of fat from our diets to provide essential fats such as omega 3 and to help us absorb vitamins. However, fats provide 9kcal per gram (twice that of carbohydrates and protein) so foods high in fat can be high in calories, making it easy to consume more calories than you need. Not only is the amount of fat in our diet important but the type of fat is crucial too. There are two main types of fat: saturated fat and unsaturated fat.

## Unsaturated fats

Sometimes called good fats as diets high in these have been found to be beneficial to health, foods high in unsaturated fats include olive/rapeseed/sunflower oil, nuts, seeds, avocados, fish and oily fish. Swapping foods high in saturated fats for foods higher in unsaturated fats can help to lower cholesterol and support a healthy heart.

## Saturated fats

Foods high in saturated fat are easy to spot as they usually remain solid at room temperature, for example coconut oil, lard, butter, cheese, fatty cuts of meat as well as cream, cakes and pastries. Too much saturated fat increases our cholesterol which can increase the risk of developing coronary heart disease. Most of us eat too much saturated fat so try to include no more than 20g a day.

## How to reduce your saturated fat intake

- Choose lean cuts of meat, trim off any visible fat, remove skin and drain cooked mince.
- Grill, bake, poach or steam rather than frying or roasting as you won't be adding any extra fat
- Use rapeseed or olive oils for cooking and dressings instead of butter, lard or coconut oil
- Include more fish and naturally lean meats such as turkey, venison or chicken in your diet
- Choose low-fat dairy options such as semi-skimmed milk and low-fat yoghurt.
- Swap cream and soured cream in recipes for low-fat yoghurt or fromage frais.
- Enjoy foods typically high in saturated fat in smaller portions and as a treat.
- Choose foods which are mostly labelled green or amber for saturated fat.