

## **Dietary Fats Explained**

You have probably often heard, it's a good idea to "cut back on fat", when it comes to eating healthy. However, not all fats are created equal, some fats are healthier than others. There are four different types of dietary fats:

### **#1 Monounsaturated Fats**

Monounsaturated fats can help reduce "bad" (LDL) cholesterol levels in your blood which can lower your risk of heart disease and stroke. Good sources of monounsaturated fats are olive, canola, peanut, sesame, and safflower oils. Other good sources include avocados, peanut butter and nuts, particularly almonds.

### **#2 Polyunsaturated Fats**

Polyunsaturated fats also have the ability to reduce LDL cholesterol levels. Oils high in polyunsaturated fats provide essential fats, omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids, that your body needs but can't produce itself. Omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids are important for many functions in the body and can be found in food items such as vegetable oils, flaxseed, leafy greens and nuts and seeds (particularly walnuts, pine nuts, sesame, sunflower and pumpkin seeds).

Fatty fish (such as salmon, mackerel, herring, lake trout, sardines and albacore tuna) are also high in omega-3 fatty acids. The American Heart Association recommends eating 2 servings of fish per week (a serving is 3.5 ounce cooked, or about  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of flaked fish).

### **#3 Saturated Fats**

Saturated fats can raise your "bad" cholesterol levels and put you at higher risk for heart disease. The American Heart Association recommends limiting saturated fats to about 5-6% of your calories per day. This translates to about 13 grams if you eat around 2,000 calories per day. Saturated fats are found in animal based foods such as meats, butter, cheese and higher fat dairy products. Fried foods or baked goods prepared with palm oils may also contain saturated fats.

### **#4 Trans Fats**

Trans fats can negatively affect your health in more ways than one. Trans fats not only raise your bad cholesterol levels, but they also lower your good cholesterol levels. Trans fats are found in many fried foods and baked goods (such as pastries, pizza dough, pie crust, cookies etc.). Check the ingredients list for "partially hydrogenated oil" which means that trans fats are likely present, even in small amounts. The American Heart Association recommends that adults who would benefit from lowering LDL cholesterol eliminate trans-fat from their diet completely.

***A general goal is for 20 to 35% of your total daily calories to come from healthy fats, such as polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats.***