



## **Heart Healthy Fats--Good vs. Bad**

Fat is an essential part of our diet. Our body needs fat to absorb fat soluble vitamins and it is also essential for healthy skin, hair and cells. However, when consumed in excess, fats contribute to weight gain, heart disease and certain types of cancer. Fats are not created equal. Some fats promote our health positively, while other increases our risks of heart disease. The key is to replace bad fats with good fats in our diet.

### **Bad Fats**

- **Saturated fats** raise total blood cholesterol as well as LDL cholesterol (the bad cholesterol). Saturated fats are mainly found in animal products such as meat, dairy, eggs and seafood. Some plant foods are also high in saturated fats such as coconut oil, palm oil and palm kernel oil.
- **Trans fats** are chemically modified fats made to be like saturated fats. They increase taste and improve shelf life. Trans fatty acids are found in many commercially packaged foods, commercially fried food such as French fries from some fast food chains, other packaged snacks such as microwaved popcorn as well as in vegetable shortening and hard stick margarine.

### **Good Fats**

- **Monounsaturated fats** (MUFAs) lower total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol (the bad cholesterol) while increasing HDL cholesterol (the good cholesterol). Nuts including peanuts, walnuts, almonds and pistachios, avocado, canola and olive oil are high in MUFAs. MUFAs have also been found to help in weight loss, particularly body fat.
- **Polyunsaturated fats** also lower total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol. Seafood like salmon and fish oil, as well as corn, soy, safflower and sunflower oils are high in polyunsaturated fats. Omega 3 fatty acids belong to this group.

### **The Skinny on Fat--Try these tips to get in enough good fat each day and skip the bad fat.**

- Start with a lean choice. For beef and pork choose products with round or loin in the name (top round, sirloin, tenderloin, etc. Choose extra lean ground beef. The label should say at least "90% lean." You may be able to find ground beef that is 93% or 95% lean. For poultry, skinless boneless chicken or turkey is your best bet. Fish is an excellent source of lean

protein. **Make half your protein lean and earn points for February SMART Start**

- Cook it lean. Trim away all of the visible fat from meats and poultry before cooking. Broil, grill, roast, poach, or boil meat, poultry, or fish instead of frying. Drain off any fat that appears during cooking. Skip or limit the breading on meat, poultry, or fish. Breading adds fat and calories. It will also cause the food to soak up more fat during frying. Prepare dry beans and peas without added fats. Choose and prepare foods without high fat sauces or gravies.
- Add Omega 3s. Eat at least two servings of fish a week, particularly fatty fish such as mackerel, salmon, sardines, trout and herring. Choose wild salmon over farmed salmon. Farmed salmon is higher in PCBs (toxins that can cause cancer). Also, trim the skin and the visible fat from your fish, since PCBs are stored in the fat portion. Canned salmon is usually wild. Other sources of omega 3s include:
  - Many commercial food products, such as bread and baked goods, yogurt and infant formula are now fortified with omega 3 fatty acids.
  - Green leafy vegetables
  - Soy and tofu
  - Nuts and seeds like almonds, walnuts, pine nuts, and flax seed
  - Cooking oils such as flax seed oil, canola oil, and soybean oil (for more information, read *The Best Cooking Oils*)
  - Some eggs, such as omega-3 enhanced eggs
  - Omega 3 supplements
- Instead of butter, use non-trans fat margarine. Promise and Smart Balance are a couple of brands to try.
- Minimize using commercially packaged foods which are high in trans fats. Always read labels to look for trans-fat free alternatives.
- As saturated fats are found in animals products, use low-fat dairy such as 1% or skim milk instead of whole milk. Try cheeses lower in fat such as part-skim mozzarella and cheeses made with 2% milk by Kraft.
- Read food labels! Less than 30% of your calories should come from total fat and less than 10% from saturated fat. When you are reading a food label, allow only up to 3 grams of total fat and 1 gram of saturated fat for every 100 calories.