Fat is one of the three main nutrients in food that supplies your body with energy. It is important to make smart, heart-healthy choices when it comes to the type of fat and portion size you choose to eat.

**What Does Fat Do?**

You may be surprised to find that fat plays an important role in keeping your body healthy:

- Gives your body energy
- Supports cell growth
- Cushions your organs
- Insulates your body to keep you warm
- Is needed to absorb certain nutrients

Fat also makes food taste good. It adds flavor and texture to the foods you eat. It also helps you feel full so you don’t overeat.

**Healthy Fats: Enjoy More Often**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monounsaturated Fat</th>
<th>Polyunsaturated Fat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olive oil</td>
<td>Vegetable oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canola oil</td>
<td>Soft tub margarine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanut oil</td>
<td>Soybean oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Walnuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corn oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunflower seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peanut butter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unsaturated fats are generally liquid at room temperature and come from plant foods and fish. These fats can help lower your total cholesterol and your LDL ("bad") cholesterol. Eating these fats can lower your risk of heart disease and stroke.

**Omega-3 Fatty Acids**

- Fatty or oily fish: salmon, trout, tuna, sardines
- Walnuts
- Chia seeds
- Ground flaxseed
- Flaxseed oil

Omega-3 fatty acids help improve your heart health by reducing plaque build up in your arteries and decreasing unhealthy fats (triglycerides) in your blood.
Unhealthy Fats: Limit These

**Saturated fats** are generally solid at room temperature and are often found in animal-based foods. These fats raise cholesterol levels, and increase your risk of heart disease and stroke.

**Saturated Fat**
- Meat
- Poultry with skin
- Coconut oil
- Palm oil and other tropical oils
- High-fat dairy: (butter, cream, ice cream, whole or 2% milk, cheese)

**Hydrogenated oils and trans fats** are fats found primarily in processed foods. These fats are formed when oils are changed structurally so they become more solid to give foods a longer shelf life. They can raise LDL ("bad") cholesterol levels while lowering HDL ("good") cholesterol levels. Eating these types of fat can increase your risk of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes.

**Hydrogenated Oils and Trans Fats**
- Stick margarine
- Crackers and chips
- Cookies and packaged baked goods
- Pastries and doughnuts
- Fried foods

**A Note About Trans Fats**
The amount of trans fat in a food is a required listing on Nutrition Facts labels. However, if the amount of trans fat is less than 0.5 grams per serving, it may show zero and yet the food still contains these fats. The best way to avoid these fats is to read the ingredient list. Look for "hydrogenated" or "partially hydrogenated oil."

**Nutrition Facts**
- Serving size: 2/3 cup (55g)
- Calories: 230
- Total Fat: 8g (10%)
- Saturated Fat: 1g (5%)
- Trans Fat: 0g
- Cholesterol: 0mg (0%)
- Sodium: 160mg (7%)
- Total Carbohydrate: 6g

**Make Healthy Fat Choices**

**Use oils** such as olive oil or canola oil instead of butter or margarine when cooking or baking.

**Grill, stir-fry, sauté, bake, or roast** foods instead of frying.

**Include fish and seafood** at least twice a week. Look for choices rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, trout, or tuna.

**Trim visible fats from meat and remove skin from poultry.**

**Enjoy a small (1 oz.) portion of nuts or seeds** as a quick snack, or add to salads or cereal for extra crunch.

**Drain** any visible fat that appears when cooking meat.

**Enjoy low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt, and cheese.**