

# Healthy Fats 101



Healthy fats are an important part of a balanced diet.

Fat has traditionally received a bad reputation in the nutrition world. You've likely seen a large variety of reduced-fat or low-fat products on the market. However, healthy fats are vital to our health and have many roles in the body. There is no reason to fear them! Instead of attempting to cut out fats altogether, focus on incorporating healthy fats into your diet to achieve optimal health.

## Roles of fats in the body

- Fats provide a slow-burning, continuous source of energy to keep you going all day.
- Fats are required for absorbing important fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K.
- Fat serves as a protective lining for your organs and hence, help to keep you warm.

## Types of fats

You've probably heard that avocados are a "healthy fat," while saturated fats like butter and animal fats should be avoided. Focus on moderation and portion control. We need about 1.6 to 2 times more unsaturated fat in our diet versus saturated fat. We do not need trans fats. Each fat needs to come from a quality source.

**Saturated fats** need to be properly balanced with other types of fat. Saturated fats are great for cooking because they tend to be highly stable, don't go rancid easily, and can stand up to higher heat cooking.

Saturated fats examples to be used in small amounts:

- Butter
- Ghee
- Coconut oil
- Palm oil
- Lard
- Animal products and by-products such as beef, pork, and eggs

**Monounsaturated fats** help reduce bad cholesterol, are relatively stable, don't go rancid easily, and can often stand up to higher heat cooking.

Good sources of monounsaturated fats to use in modest amounts include:

- Avocados; avocado oil
- Olives; olive oil
- Safflower oil
- Nut oils such as almond, pecan, or macadamia

**Polyunsaturated fats** are comprised of the essential Omega 6 and Omega 3 fatty acids. Unlike the other fatty acids, the body cannot make these fats. They must be consumed directly. Omega 6 fatty acids are the most common type of fat found in the typical American diet.

Good sources of polyunsaturated fats to use in modest amounts include:

- Flaxseed oil
- Canola oil
- Walnut oil
- Soybean oil
- Fatty fishes such as salmon, tuna, mackerel
- Nuts and seeds such as walnuts, flaxseeds, chia seeds

Omega 3 fatty acids have been shown to have anti-inflammatory properties and reduce the risk of heart disease. Most Americans do not consume enough Omega 3s. Focus on increasing your Omega 3 intake.

**Trans fats** are industrially processed vegetable oils and are not healthy. Trans fats can increase bad cholesterol and decrease good cholesterol. They are frequently found as "partially hydrogenated oil" on ingredient labels and are often used by restaurants to fry foods.

## Fat comparisons

Fat	Heat	Flavor	Price
Butter	Low	Flavorful	Medium
Ghee	High	Flavorful	High
Olive oil	Medium	Flavorful	High
Coconut oil	High	Slightly coconut	High
Vegetable oil	Medium	Neutral	Low
Canola oil	High	Neutral	Low
Avocado oil	High	Neutral	High
Sunflower oil	High	Neutral	High
Peanut oil	High	Flavorful	Low
Sesame oil	High	Flavorful	Medium

Source: [www.fedandfit.com](http://www.fedandfit.com) and [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)

