

Low-Calorie vs. Low-Fat?

The Facts about Fat

Do you purchase low-fat/non-fat food options religiously? Do you avoid fat as often as possible?

It is important to realize that eating low-fat/non-fat food options without paying attention to caloric intake can set yourself up for failure! Keep in mind that cutting out fat does not necessarily mean you are cutting calories. Many low or non-fat food sources have more empty calories [sugars, sweeteners, etc...]. Eating these types of foods leaves you feeling not overly satiated or satisfied. A little fat goes a long way in making you feel energized.

Fat has gotten a bad rap over the years. The body NEEDS fat - it is a major energy source and also helps you to absorb certain vitamins and nutrients. Only some fats are bad for you: saturated and trans-fats.

These bad fats increase your risk of developing heart disease by increasing LDL cholesterol and triglycerides.

Unsaturated (polyunsaturated and monounsaturated) fats are actually good for you in moderation. These fats help lower LDL, prevent abnormal heart rhythms and prevent heart disease.

For optimal health, 20-30% of your daily calories should come from healthy fats. You can find healthy fats in nuts, seeds, fish, avocados, olive oil, canola oil, coconut oil, hempseed oil and flaxseed oil.

Counting Calories: Get Back to Basics

Calories are the energy in food. Your body needs this fuel from food in order to keep functioning. Energy from calories fuels every function - from running on a treadmill to hanging up a coat. We NEED calories in order to survive.

Regardless of where they come from (fat, protein or carbohydrates), the calories you eat are either converted into energy or stored as fat. These stored calories will remain in your body as fat unless you use them up, either by reducing your caloric intake or increasing physical activity so that you burn more calories.

The best way to maintain a healthy weight is a simple method of calories in versus calories out. One pound of fat is the equivalent of 3500 calories - in order to lose one pound, you need to burn off or cut out 3500 calories per week.

While the type of food you eat is important as far as what kind of nutrients it contains and how that benefits your health, when it comes to weight loss, a calorie is a calorie. You'll learn that healthier choices have a profound impact on how your body functions and how you feel after eating it - so make sure to eat a well-balanced diet with a good balance of carbohydrates, protein and healthy fats.