

# YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT

## FAT: FACTS & FADS

You're trying to lose weight. You count every calorie, every gram of fat, avoid high fat foods like nuts and oils, and enjoy some "fat free" snacks. If you were living in the 1990's you were doing everything right! Nutrition facts change rapidly, and it seems impossible to keep up! So, what's the deal with fat, fads, and what are the solid nutritional facts that we can rely on?

### It's a FACT: Fat should not be feared.

The shift to low-fat foods in the 90's didn't improve our health. The fear of fat meant cutting back on healthy foods that served as a major source of energy for our bodies but most importantly our brains! The brain is made up of 60% fat and the fear fat fad of the 1990's starved our brains and may have contributed to today's epidemics of anxiety, ADHD, dementia, Alzheimer's, and depression. Aside from their benefits for brain health and development, fats aid in maintaining cell integrity, energy production, joint movement and lubrication, and the absorption of vitamins and minerals. But are all fats equal?



### It's a FACT: Eat more beneficial "good fats" and limit harmful "bad fats".

**Mono and polyunsaturated fats promote health!** These fats come from vegetables, nuts, seeds, and fish. To spot a healthy fat over a non-healthy fat look for a liquid. Healthy fats will not solidify and are always in a liquid state. Polyunsaturated fats include Omega 3 and 6 essential fatty acids which promote heart health, reduce cholesterol, and help with inflammation and muscle and joint movement. Great sources include: avocados, walnuts, almonds, chia seeds, salmon and fish oil, flaxseed, safflower and olive oil.

**Saturated fat in moderation.** Research has shown the potential for saturated fat to clog arteries and promote inflammation. It is recommended that saturated fat be no more than 10% of your total daily calories. When opting to consume some saturated fat in your diet focus on lean grass-fed red meats, coconut oil, quality cheese and grass-fed butter.

**Avoid trans fats.** Avoiding processed foods in your diet is important, but eliminating processed oils and fats is especially important. Trans fats are oils that have been altered through a process called hydrogenation to change a liquid fat to a solid. This transforms a healthy fat to an inflammatory substance. Every 2% of calories from trans fat increases the risk of heart disease by 23%! Check labels and avoid foods like potato chips, french fries, cookies, and commercial pastries and baked goods.



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### It's a FACT: Everything in moderation. Trust the Facts, Not the Fads!

Should we load our diet with fat? Too much of a good thing can be dangerous too. It's important to be clear on the different types and portions of fat that we benefit from. For example, the most recent fad diets have showcased the benefits of fat for weight loss and energy but at the demonization of entire food groups. Eliminating essential nutrients from our diets and focusing too heavily on one group can put us at risk for deficiencies, digestive problems, and provide a short-term solution to a long-term problem. Let's take a closer look.

#### Atkins Diet

"Bacon and Eggs Diet" popular in late 1990's early 2000's.

**Objective:** Carbs cause blood sugar spikes which cause us to store fat. Elimination of carbohydrates for weight loss.

##### Pros:

- Lowers cholesterol
- Regulates blood sugar
- Adds some good fats to the diet

##### Cons:

- Possible overconsumption of saturated fats
- Lack of fibre can lead to constipation
- Too much protein can impact the liver
- Some processed and packaged foods
- Potential digestive problems
- Usually not sustainable

#### Paleo Diet

"The Caveman Diet" made popular in mid 2000's.

**Objective:** To emulate the diet of the hunter-gatherer society eliminating grains, legumes, and dairy for weight loss.

##### Pros:

- Eliminates processed foods
- Focus on fruits, vegetables, healthy proteins and fats
- Can be nutrient-dense when done right

##### Cons:

- Eliminates food groups
- Evolution may not make it applicable today
- Difficult for vegetarians
- Can be expensive
- Can lead to overconsumption of animal protein
- Very restrictive

#### Ketogenic Diet

"The Keto Diet" is the most popular current "fad diet".

**Objective:** Created to treat epilepsy. Used for weight loss by initiating ketosis which burns fat instead of glucose.

##### Pros:

- Regulates blood sugar
- Adds some good fats to the diet
- Quick weight loss can be a starting point

##### Cons:

- Can lead to overconsumption of bad fat
- Can create deficiencies
- Too much protein can impact the liver
- May impact blood lipid levels
- Potential for digestive issues
- Usually not sustainable

**Don't get caught in the diet trap and the latest fads.**

**Find something sustainable for YOUR lifestyle and focus on balance, moderation, and variety.**

Sources: <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/healthy-eating/choosing-healthy-fats.htm>  
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