



Saturated Fats aren't Inherently Harmful and can be Included as Part of a Healthy Diet

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Editorial

The effects of saturated fat on health are among the most controversial topics in all nutrition.

While some experts warn that consuming too much or even moderate amounts can negatively affect health, others argue that saturated fats aren't inherently harmful and can be included as part of a healthy diet. Fats are compounds that play essential roles in many aspects of human health. There are three main categories of fats saturated fats, unsaturated fats, and Trans fats. All fats are made up of carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen molecules (2Trusted Source). Saturated fats are saturated with hydrogen molecules and contain only single bonds between carbon molecules. On the other hand, unsaturated fats have at least one double bond between carbon molecules. This saturation of hydrogen molecules results in saturated fats being solid at room temperature, unlike unsaturated fats, such as olive oil, which tend to be liquid at room temperature.

Keep in mind that there are different types of saturated fats depending on their carbon chain length, including short-long- medium and very-long-chain fatty acids and all of which have different effects on health.

Plus, a number of studies, including large reviews, contradict the recommendations to avoid saturated fat and instead consume vegetable oils and carb-rich foods, leading to warranted consumer confusion. From a chemical standpoint, saturated fats are simply fat molecules

that have no double bonds between carbon molecules because they are saturated with hydrogen molecules. Saturated fats are typically solid at room temperature.

Examples of foods with saturated fat are fatty beef, lamb, pork, poultry with skin, beef fat (tallow), lard and cream, butter, cheese and other dairy products made from whole or reduced-fat (2 percent) milk.

In addition, many baked goods and fried foods can contain high levels of saturated fats. Some plant-based oils, such as palm oil, palm kernel oil and coconut oil, also contain primarily saturated fats, but do not contain cholesterol.

Reducing saturated fat intake has no effect on your risk of heart disease or death. Replacing saturated fat with refined carbs seems to increase your risk of heart disease. Replacing saturated fat with polyunsaturated fat may reduce your risk of cardiovascular events, but results for heart attacks, strokes, and death are mixed. Healthy eating starts with a diet rich in whole foods, including sources of healthy fats like avocados, nuts, seeds, eggs, and olive oil. Just as over consuming any macronutrient can cause weight gain, eating too many fat-rich foods can cause you to gain weight if the calories aren't accounted for elsewhere in your diet. Having overweight or obesity can raise your risk for heart disease and other chronic health conditions like diabetes. However, fats are an essential part of the diet. Try to choose the right types of fats and to enjoy them in moderation as part of a healthful eating plan.

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