

Eat fats sparingly

In this pamphlet we talk about fat in foods. We want people to eat healthily so that they can be healthy. There are different kinds of fat. Some fats are good and some are not so good. It is also important to know that eating too much of any type of fat is also not healthy.

Do our bodies need fat?

Yes, our bodies need fat from food, because:

- Fats give us energy and keep us warm.
- Fats help us to absorb certain important nutrients.
- Babies and children need fats to grow.
- Good fats prevent illnesses.



Which fats and oils are good choices?

- Vegetable oil, such as olive, canola and sunflower oil (use sparingly).
- Soft 'tub' margarine (thinly spread).
- Oily fish, such as pilchards, tuna, sardines, mackerel, snoek, salmon (eat at least once a week).
- Walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, pecan nuts, sunflower seeds, peanuts and peanut butter.
- Avocados

Which fats and oils are not good choices?

Fat that you can see
on red meat
Ghee
White cooking fat
Butter
Meat dripping
Lard
Coconut oil and
palm kernel oil



Which foods contain fat that we cannot see?

- Coffee creamers
- Chocolate
- Fried (crumbed) fish
- 'Vetkoek' and doughnuts
- Full cream milk and full cream cheese such as cheddar and gouda
- Tea whiteners
- Pies
- Biscuits
- Ice cream
- Chips and crisps
- Chicken skin

Some foods are high in fats AND sugar and should be eaten as seldom as possible:

Doughnuts, rich cake with icing, ice cream, 'vetkoek' with sweet filling and chocolate. Keep these for special treats!

What do the words mean?

Energy

The power that your body needs to keep going.

Healthy

To be well and free from illness.

Fat

The most concentrated source of energy from food. Fat can be obtained from animal foods (e.g. from meat and butter) or from plant foods (e.g. sunflower oil).

Minerals

Nutrients which our bodies need to work properly.

Vitamins

Nutrients that are found in foods and which protect our bodies.



What does fat do to the body?

When you eat too much fats in foods you

- can become overweight
- can get high blood pressure
- can have a heart attack
- can have a stroke

We have to restrict total fat intake

Should I rather not eat fat at all?

No, you should eat fat, but SPARINGLY.
Little at a time and little during the day.

Try to replace the fats that are not good for you with those that are good for you.

Remember to mix your foods that contain fat with other foods that don't have fat, such as vegetables, dry beans, peas or lentils, starchy foods (maize meal, potatoes, samp, rice).



Photographs: UNICEF/Giacomo Pirozzi

How much do you know?

What do you think does the word sparingly mean?

Of the foods that you and your family use, which ones do you think contain fat?

Why do you think it is important to use fat sparingly?

What will you do to reduce the fat in your food?

For more information, contact:

The Department of Health,
Directorate Nutrition,
Private bag x828, Pretoria, 0001
Tel 012 312 0000, Fax 012 312 3112



Tips to reduce fat intake

- When buying meat, try to buy lean meat.
- Cut off all visible fat from meat.
- Boil, bake, grill, poach, steam or microwave foods.
- Eat less fried and deep fried foods, such as take away foods.
- Use less oil or fat when cooking.
- Spread margarine thinly - it is easier if it is soft.
- Avoid using flour and breadcrumbs as these absorb more fat.
- Use Low Fat / reduced fat milk products
- Use fish, lentils, split peas or dry beans in stead of red meat, chicken and cheese.
- Use soft 'tub' margarine instead of hard 'brick' margarine.
- Use herbs or garlic instead of fat or oil when cooking vegetables.

Did you know?

When oil is heated and cooled too often, it becomes bad and is harmful to your body.

Don't use oil over and over again.

When the oil changes colour (after about three uses) it should not be used again.



Reducing total fat from food intake helps to control our weight