

What Are the Types of Fat?

Most foods contain several different kinds of fat. Some are better for your health than others. It is wise to choose healthier types of fat, and enjoy them in moderation. Keep in mind that even healthier fats contain calories and should be **used sparingly** for weight management. Here is some information about healthy and harmful dietary fats.

The four major types of fats are:



- **Monounsaturated fats**



- **Polyunsaturated fats**



- **Saturated fats**



- **Trans fats**



Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are known as “healthy fats” because they are good for your heart, cholesterol levels, and overall health. These fats tend to be “liquid” at room temperature. Consider beneficial polyunsaturated fats containing Omega-3 fatty acids found in fatty fish, flaxseed, and walnuts.

Healthy Dietary Fats

Monounsaturated Fat	Polyunsaturated Fat
Olive oil	Soybean oil
Canola oil	Corn oil
Sunflower oil	Safflower oil
Peanut oil	Walnuts
Olives	Sunflower, sesame, and pumpkin seeds; flaxseed
Nuts (almonds, peanuts, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, cashews)	Fatty fish (salmon, tuna, mackerel, herring, trout, anchovies, sardines, and eel)
Avocados	Soy milk
Peanut butter	Tofu

Tips for increasing healthy fats in your diet:

- Cook with olive oil.
- Plan snacks of nuts or olives.
- Eat more avocados.
- Dress your own salads instead of using commercial dressings.

Saturated fats and trans fats are known as the “harmful fats.” They increase your risk of disease and elevate cholesterol. Saturated fats tend to be solid at room temperature, but they are also found in liquid tropical oils (palm and coconut). Trans fats (partially hydrogenated or hydrogenated fats) are oils that have been modified for longer shelf life. Trans fats are very bad for you. No amount of trans fats is healthy.



Harmful Dietary Fats

Saturated Fat	Trans Fat
High-fat cuts of meat (beef, lamb, pork)	Commercially baked pastries, cookies, doughnuts, muffins, cakes, pizza dough, pie crusts
Chicken with the skin	Packaged snack foods (crackers, microwave popcorn, chips)
Whole-fat dairy products (cream/milk)	Stick margarine
Butter	Vegetable shortening
Palm and coconut oil (snack foods, non-dairy creamers, whipped toppings)	Fried foods (French fries, fried chicken, chicken nuggets, breaded fish)
Ice cream	Candy bars
Cheese	Pre-mixed products (cake mix, pancake mix, chocolate drink mix)
Lard	

Tips for decreasing harmful fats in your diet:

- Read food labels and avoid trans fats and hydrogenated/partially hydrogenated oils.
- Avoid fried products.
- Avoid fast food.
- When eating out, ask that foods be prepared with olive oil.

