



ALL ABOUT FATS

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When most individuals think of fats, they think they are just down right unhealthy, even though this is a macronutrient that we need in our diet, we must just not have too much of it. When eating the right amounts and types of fats they play many important roles in our bodies. It is often confusing to know which fats are good for us and which are not, by reading this article you will soon be equipped to make the best decisions regarding fats and your health.

THE BASICS

1. The role of Healthy Fats

Fat is an essential part of your diet as it is a major fuel source for your body and also the main way in which we store energy. It helps absorb certain nutrients such as your fat-soluble vitamins namely vitamins A, D, E and K and produce important hormones^{1,2}. Fats help protect many of your body's organs, give your cells structure and helps maintain your core body temperature³. Healthy fats also have heart and brain health benefits and are great for your hair, skin and nails.

2. Different types of Fats

There are four major dietary fats in the foods we eat namely:

- Saturated fats
- Trans fats
- Monounsaturated fats
- Polyunsaturated fats

These four types all have different physical and chemical properties. The bad fats, saturated and trans fats, tend to have a more solid structure at room temperature, think of things like hard-brick butter, a glob of coconut oil and cheeses. While unsaturated fats (mono- and polyunsaturated) tend to be more liquid, like liquid cooking oil, olive oil and canola oil.

The bad fats, saturated and trans fats, are usually from animal sources, these raise bad cholesterol (LDL cholesterol) levels in your body whereas good fats, mono- and polyunsaturated fats helps to lower bad cholesterol levels and help raise good cholesterol levels (HDL cholesterol) which are beneficial for health if consumed as part of a balanced, healthy diet.



3. Omega-3 fatty acids

Omega-3 fatty acids can be found in fish and other seafood (especially cold-water fatty fish, such as salmon, mackerel, tuna, herring and sardines), in nuts and seeds (such as flaxseed, chia seeds and walnuts) and in plant oils (such as flaxseed oil, soybean oil and canola oil)⁴. Certain fortified foods also contain omega-3 such as cereals, eggs, infant formulas, some milks and yoghurts. Omega-3 has countless health benefits, it helps keep your heart healthy and helps decrease the risk for cardiovascular disease (CVD). Studies have shown that omega-3 fatty acids help decrease the risk of arrhythmias (abnormal heartbeats) which can lead to sudden death, they also help decrease triglyceride levels, slow growth rate of atherosclerotic plaque and help lower blood pressure^{3,4}.

4. Can fats make me fat?

Too much of anything can make you fat, that's why the popular saying "everything in moderation" should always be applied. Fats are energy dense, meaning they contain more calories than protein and carbohydrates. They do however add flavour to foods and have a satiating effect which may mean you are kept fuller for longer, what's more important here is to choose foods that provide good fats (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats) and balance the amount of calories you eat from all foods with the amount of calories your body burns.

Aim to eat a dietary pattern that is healthy and balanced, one that includes lots of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. A meal plan that chooses low-fat dairy products, lean meats such as poultry and fish, plant proteins, healthy vegetable oils and nuts; and limits the intake of salt, candies, sugar sweetened beverages and red meats^{1,3}. Doing so means that your diet will be lower in both saturated fats and *trans* fats.

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FUTURELIFE® Smart food™ is high in protein and contains 19 amino acids. Formulated using unique FutureSoy, providing 21% of energy from protein and 9g of protein per 50g serving. It is high in Omega-3 (healthy fats) and naturally free from trans fatty acids and cholesterol (bad fats).



The product contains 21 Vitamins and Minerals delivering 50% of daily requirements for all vitamins and most minerals⁶. Additionally, it contains functional ingredients namely fibre and inulin (great for everyday digestive health) as well as MODUCARE® (a daily immune supplement, helping to balance and strengthen the immune system, made from a patented blend of natural plant sterols and sterolins, in a clinically proven ratio of 100:1. MODUCARE® is supplied exclusively to FUTURELIFE® under license from Aspen Pharmacare). This product provides complete nutrition and is the smart choice for you and your family. To learn more visit www.futurelife.co.za .

CONCLUSION

Now that you know that not all fats were created equally, you can make smarter, healthier choices around fats. Try replacing foods high in saturated or trans fats with foods high in mono- and polyunsaturated fats. This means eating more liquid oils, fish, nuts and seeds and perhaps this also means replacing some of your meats with plant proteins. Look at your overall dietary pattern, ensure you are eating the right amount of calories and that your diet includes lots of fruits, veggies, wholegrains, healthy fats and that you are drinking enough water every single day.

REFERENCES

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