

Fats of life: part 2

Fat is an essential component of any balanced and healthy diet. Dietary fats are the most concentrated source of kilojoules (energy). Fats contain 2 ½ times as much energy as carbohydrates and proteins. Although a high-fat diet is shown to contribute to obesity and many other diseases of lifestyle such as cancer, diabetes & heart disease, it is the type of fat and not just the amount that is important. Many of the foods we eat contain saturated fat or trans fats. As was mentioned in part 1 these fats are not healthy and should be minimised in our diets.

Tips to reduce your saturated (poor) fat intake:

READ NUTRITIONAL TABLES

	Per serving	Per 100g
Fat (Total)		< 5g

Reading labels for the fat content is important as there are many hidden fats in manufactured foods. Just look at the total fat and refer to the PER 100g column. Go for foods that have less than 5g fat per 100g as much as possible.

Tips to reduce “unhealthy” fat in your eating plan:

Sources of unhealthy fats	How to reduce fat
Margarine/ Butter	Use minimally if at all. Use other spreads . chutney, mustard, tomato sauce, cottage cheese, marmite, relishes, fish spread, jamsō
Oil	Use 5ml (1 teaspoon) per person. Use non-stick spray or pans.
Whipped cream	Use low fat chilled evaporated milk.
Sour cream	Use fat free plain yoghurt; smooth cottage cheese and lemon juice.
Mayonnaise	Mix low fat mayonnaise with fat free plain yoghurt.
Salad dressings	Use fat free dressings using vinegar, mustard and fresh herbs E.g.: Balsamic vinegar; honey; wholegrain mustard in ratio 1:1:1
Sauces	Avoid cream-based sauces. Replace with tomato-based sauces; chutney; monkey gland, sweet and sour. Go for sauces that have less than 5g total fat per 100g.
Full cream cheese – cheddar/gouda/edam...	Use soft low fat cheese . ricotta, fat free cottage & cream cheese. If necessary, use lesser amounts and preferably not daily. TIP: If you grate cheese you will use less on pasta dishes, sandwiches, etc.
Red meat	Remove all visible fat before cooking. Limit to 2/3 times per week. Rather opt for lean red meat such as game or ostrich.
Chicken	Use breast fillets (skinned & deboned).
Fish	Avoid crumbed or battered fish. Grill, poach and bake fish. Use fish canned in water or tomato.
Processed meat	Not only high in fat but full of nitrates (chemicals thought to cause cancer). Use shaved chicken/turkey. Lean meat cuts such as roast beef.
Pies, sausage rolls, other pastries, croissants	Avoid pastries as very high in fat. Use phyllo pastry & create your own delicious fat free pastries!
Chocolate, toffees, fudge, sweets with coconut/nuts	Opt for clear sweets, marshmallows, wine gums, hard candy on occasion. Even better would be to have fresh or controlled portions of dried fruit when feeling like something sweet.
Crisps, nuts & peanuts	Replace with dried fruit, unsalted pretzels, popcorn.

Top 5 fat busting tips:

- 1. We'll start with the easiest: Choose low-fat products over regular ones.** Do not accept the argument that low-fat versions don't taste as good. It's not true! Low-fat versions may not taste the way you or your family is used to, but after a week or two of using the new version, you'll stop noticing the subtle decline in richness.
- 2. If you can see fat on your food, remove it!** If there is fat on the meat, trim it off; If there is skin on the chicken, remove it; If there is oil pooling on the top of the pizza, sop it up with a paper towel; If there is dressing pooled at the bottom of your salad, pour it off. You get the idea!
- 3. Eat the right meats.** Meat is one of the primary forms of saturated fat. The best thing to do is to choose the leanest meats you can, always remove any visible fat and then use low fat preparation methods.
- 4. Be aware of hidden fat by reading labels and looking out for certain keywords.** In general go for products with less than 10g total fat per 100g (or less than 5g/100g if you want to lose weight). Look out for the words "partially hydrogenated" or "hydrogenated." If you see that, step away from the food and nobody will get hurt!
- 5. Be fast-food savvy.** The amount of fat in a take away meal can be huge! The chips, the burgers, the "special sauces" made from mayonnaise, the fried this-and-that, even the salads swimming in oily or creamy dressings are your dietary enemy. Make a commitment to compromising e.g.: if you really feel like the burger, pass on the chips and grab a sugar free cold drink instead of having the whole supersize package! Also be brave and try smaller portions . you may be surprised at how little you really need to eat to feel satisfied.

When it comes to fat, don't underestimate the impact that a simple lower fat choice can have. Take a look at the whopping fat savings from just a few examples below:

An example of a fat saving:

1 cup of full cream milk (250ml)	10g fat SAVING
1 cup of skim milk (250ml)	
30g cheddar cheese	8g fat SAVING
45g fat free cottage cheese	
90g fatty chop	24g fat SAVING
90g fat trimmed chop	
TOTAL SAVING	33g fat SAVING

