

—FAT FACTS—

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What Are Dietary Fats?

Did you know that fat is an essential part of a healthy and balanced diet? Dietary fat has long been a target for misinformation, with factors such as fad diets, social media, and outdated beliefs making it difficult to know what to listen to.

This blog will review fat facts, outlining how dietary fat can fit into our diet according to evidence-based research.

Dietary fat is simply defined as fat from food. There are three main types: **unsaturated, saturated, and trans fat.**



Trans Fats Ban:

Trans fats, also known as hydrogenated oils, were once more common in items like baked goods due to trans fats being highly shelf-stable and inexpensive to produce. However, in January 2020, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration banned companies in the United States from selling food items with trans fats related to their connection to negative health outcomes. When speaking about the importance and benefits of dietary fat, this does *not* include trans fats.

How Much Do We Need?

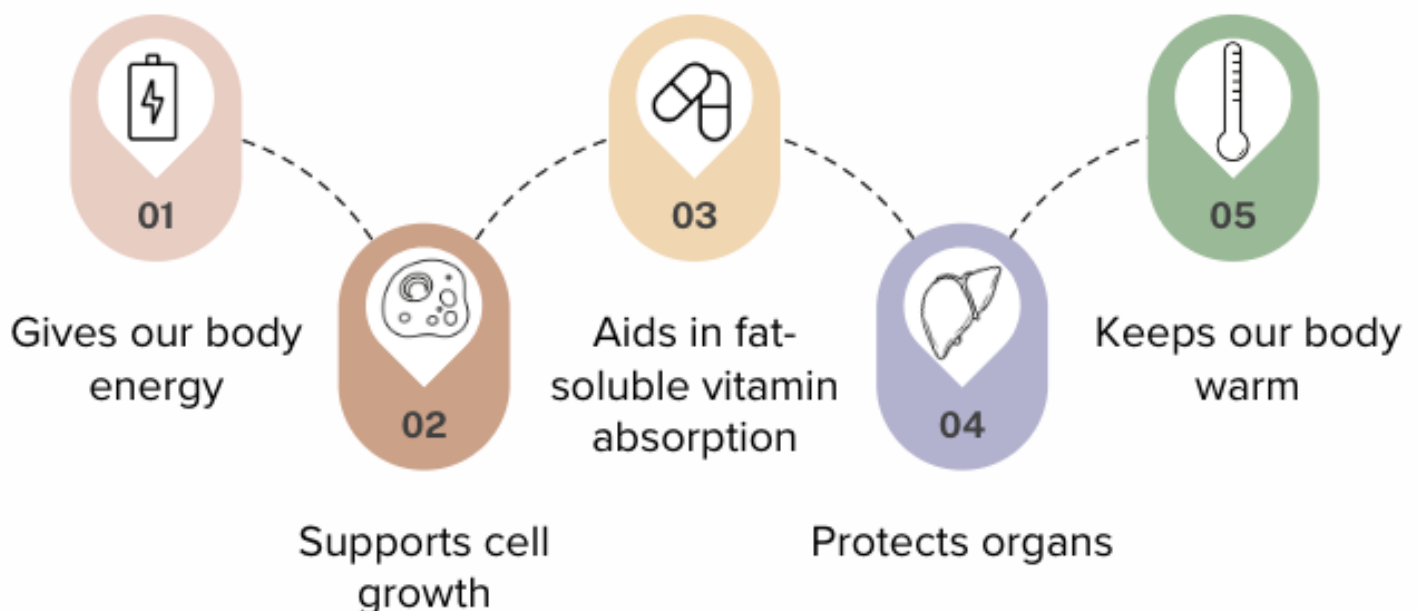
According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, no more than **20-35%** of daily calories should come from fat. Based on a 2,000-calorie diet, this is around **44-78g** of fat per day.

Both the gram and percentage amount can be found on the nutrition facts label (also based on a 2,000-calorie diet). This can help you make food decisions that are best for you.



Amount Per Serving	Calories	% Daily Value
Total Fat 7 g	310	20%
Saturated Fat 4 g		
Trans Fat 0 g		
Polyunsaturated Fat 1 g		
Monounsaturated Fat 0g		
Cholesterol 15 mg		
Sodium 430 mg		
Total Carbohydrate 90 mg		

Why Do We Need Dietary Fat?



Unsaturated Fat

Unsaturated fats are also known as “liquid at room temperature” fats. It is recommended that the majority of fat intake should come from unsaturated fats as they are considered an essential part of the diet due to their many health benefits.

Unsaturated fats are broken into two categories: **mono and polyunsaturated.**

Monounsaturated

Sources: olive oil, avocados, nuts, seeds.



- Can help lower the risk of heart disease and stroke.
- Can help lower “bad” and boost “good” cholesterol levels.

Polyunsaturated

Sources: walnuts, fish, seeds, edamame.



- Omega-3 fatty acids are a popular type of polyunsaturated fat that’s found in fatty fish (salmon, tuna)
- Promotes mental well-being, cognitive health, and heart health.

Saturated Fat

Saturated fats are also known as “solid at room temperature” fats. They are primarily found in animal products, full fat dairy products, and coconut oil. It is recommended to eat saturated fat in *moderation*, as over consuming them has the potential to raise “bad” cholesterol, increasing the risk of heart disease.

According to the American Heart Association, aim for **5-6%** of calories to come from saturated fat. Based on a 2,000-calorie diet, this is generally a limit of **13g** per day.

Grams of Fat

Sirloin steak (3oz): **4.8g**



Cheddar cheese (1 slice): **6g**



Ground chicken (3.5oz): **2.5g**



Coconut oil (1 tbsp): **12g**



Tips to Reduce

Poultry items (chicken and turkey) have less saturated fat than red meat

Purchase reduced fat or fat free dairy products

Check percentages on ground meat and look for 90% lean, 10% fat ratios

Reduce the amount of times cooking with coconut oil or swap with a liquid oil

Reminder: Although it is recommended to consume saturated fats in moderation, the food items that contain them can still fit in a balanced diet! These products can be high in protein, calcium, and different vitamins.