

The Skinny on Fats

Fat is one of the Big 3 nutrients (the other two are carbohydrates and proteins). These three nutrients give us energy from our food.

There are 4 different types of fats, monounsaturated, polyunsaturated, saturated and trans fats. Each has different properties and have a range of bad to good. Fats are measured in grams on a food label.

Nutrition research recommends that we should have no more than 30% of our calories come from total fat. If you take in 1200 calories per day, then no more than 360 calories should come from fat. There are 9 calories per fat gram. That calculates to 40 grams of fat per day from all sources in your diet.

Monounsaturated Fat – should make up no more than 10% of your diet; a good fat; help maintain HDL (healthy) cholesterol, considered heart healthy.

Food sources – peanut butter, almonds, avocados

Polyunsaturated Fat – should make up no more than 10% of your diet; an OK fat; can help lower risk of heart disease, gives some protection against hypertension, essential PUFAs include omega-3 and omega-6.

Food sources – sunflower seeds, walnuts, fish

Saturated and Trans Fat – these two combined should make up no more than 10% of your diet; not so OK fats but not harmful if intake is kept low; will raise your LDL (unhealthy) cholesterol.

Food sources – poultry skin, fat ring on meat; high fat dairy, crackers, pastries