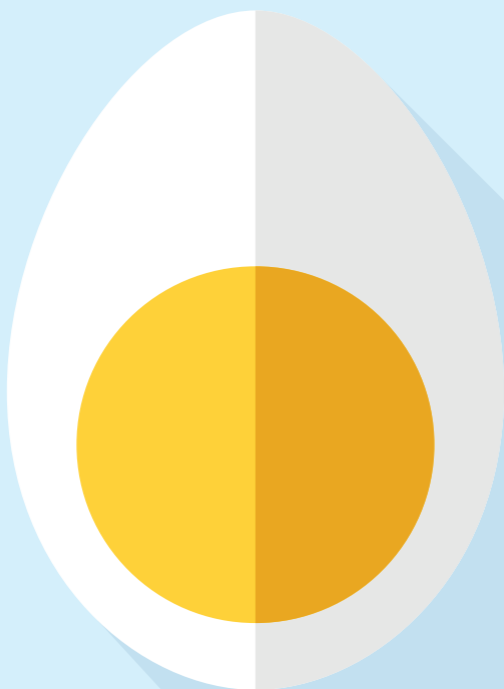


Wise Food & Lifestyle Choices  
for Better Overall Health

# THE IMPORTANCE OF FAT IN YOUR DIET



FOOD FOR  
**THOUGHT**

# UNDERSTANDING FATS

Have you been told to cut back on fat for your health? If so, it's good to realize your body needs some fat for good health. Understanding the basics about fat can help you make healthy choices.

**Canadian adults are encouraged to consume 20 to 35% of total calories as fat.**



The types of fat you eat are considered more important for health than the overall amount.<sup>2</sup>

## TYPES OF FAT

Dietary fats consist primarily of fatty acids. Fatty acids are categorized into four main types according to their chemical structure. Different types of fat can have different effects on health.

**Polyunsaturated fats** which include omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, have two or more double bonds. They tend to remain liquid.

**Monounsaturated fats** are omega-9 fatty acids that contain a single double bond. They typically remain liquid at low temperatures.

**Saturated fats** are saturated with hydrogen and have only single bonds between carbon atoms. They tend to be solid at room temperature.

**Trans fats** are formed using a chemical process called partial hydrogenation that turns vegetable oils from liquid into semi-solid fats.



## WHAT ARE FATS?

Fats are macronutrients - an important source of energy and essential fatty acids necessary for good health. Fats also help the body absorb the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K. They have many other vital functions, which include:

- › Cell structure
- › Storing energy
- › Insulating the body
- › Cushioning organs
- › Hormonal components



## HOW MUCH FAT DO YOU NEED?

Current dietary recommendations from the Institute of Medicine recognize that there are a range of healthy fat intakes (as shown in Table 1).<sup>1</sup> These recommendations encourage Canadian adults to consume 20 to 35% of total calories as fat. For an adult who needs 2,000 calories per day, this translates to about 45 to 77 grams of fat daily. Your individual requirements will vary depending on your daily energy needs. Fat is also important for children's healthy growth and development.

**TABLE 1 – RECOMMENDED DAILY FAT INTAKES**

AGE (years)	RECOMMENDED FAT INTAKES* (as a percent of calories)
Children 1 - 3	30 to 40%
Children 4 - 18	25 to 35%
Adults 19 +	20 to 35%

\*Based on the Acceptable Macronutrient Distribution Ranges<sup>1</sup>

**TABLE 2 – THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF FATS IN SOME**

	SERVING SIZE	TOTAL FAT (g)
Naturegg™ Omega Plus™ liquid eggs	63 g	2
Naturegg™ Simply Egg Whites™	100 g	0
Naturegg™ Omega 3 eggs	53 g**	5
Naturegg™ Omega Plus™ eggs	53 g**	5
Regular eggs	100 g	10
Chicken, meat only, roasted	100 g	7
Salmon, Atlantic, wild, broiled	100 g	8
Potato chips, plain (12 chips)	21 g	7
Hamburger, single patty, plain	100 g	12
French Fries, restaurant prepared	100 g	17
Butter	14 g	12
Non-hydrogenated Margarine	14 g	12

\*Monounsaturated Fat  
 \*\* 1 Large Egg  
 N/A = Not Available

Sources: Health Canada, Canadian Nutrient File, 2017 and Bumbrae Farms Ltd. (for Naturegg eggs)

## SATURATED FATS

As nutrition research evolves, health authorities are rethinking their dietary guidance on saturated fat. The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada’s current advice encourages you to eat a healthy diet with a variety of natural whole foods and to eat fewer highly processed foods.<sup>2</sup>

The Foundation recognizes recent research shows the health effects of saturated fats may depend on the foods in which they are found.<sup>2</sup> You can be comfortable eating nutritious whole foods that contain saturated fats such as lean meats and dairy foods in appropriate portions as part of a healthy balanced diet. It’s the saturated fat in highly processed foods such as fried foods, donuts and candy bars that is of concern. It’s best to pay attention to the quality and quantity of the foods you eat and your overall diet rather than any one nutrient at a time.

## COMMON FOODS

	OMEGA-3 (mg)	OMEGA-6 (mg)	MONO* (g)	SATURATED FAT (g)	TRANS FAT (g)
	300	100	0.6	0.5	0
	0	0	0	0	0
	400	800	2	1.5	0
	400	800	2	1.5	0
	144	1270	4	3	0
	140	1480	3	2	N/A
	2560	220	3	1	N/A
	71	1635	4	1	0
	131	1527	5	5	0.5
	118	925	8	7	N/A
	45	393	3	7	0.5
	811	2042	6	2	0.3

\*Note: **1.** Egg related values are based on sample averages. Therefore, types of fat may not add up to total fat. **2.** Nutrient values for processed foods can vary considerably. Thus, these represent typical values only.

### Saturated fat should not be an issue if you follow this advice:

- cook from scratch at home
- choose whole natural foods
- pay attention to portion sizes
- avoid highly processed foods



## TRANS FATS

Industrial trans fats are produced commercially by the partial “hydrogenation” of liquid vegetable oils (such as canola and soybean oils). This process changes the chemical structure of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats into trans fats that are more solid. However, industrial trans fats raise LDL cholesterol and lower HDL cholesterol levels.<sup>3</sup> The industrial trans fats found in processed foods have been linked to an increased risk of heart disease and stroke.

Despite recent efforts to reduce industrial trans fats in the Canadian food supply, many foods still contain high levels.<sup>3</sup> Trans fats are found in many fast foods, especially deep-fried foods such as donuts and chicken fingers. They are also found in many baked goods and desserts as well as in coffee whiteners and hard margarines. Look for trans fats on the Nutrition Facts tables on packaged foods and limit processed foods that tend to contain these trans fats.

Some trans fats are also found naturally in milk products and meat from ruminant animals. The small amount of natural trans fats from these foods does not appear to pose a concern for heart health. In fact, research suggests natural trans fats known as conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) may benefit health.<sup>4</sup> Although more research is needed, researchers believe that CLA may play a role in helping to protect against heart disease and cancer.

## **CHOOSING HEALTHY FATS**

**Ongoing research supports the health benefits associated with diets rich in polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. These unsaturated fats play many important roles in:**

- › membrane structures
- › blood vessel cells
- › brain development
- › brain and nerve function
- › eye health and vision
- › reproductive function



Replacing saturated and trans fats with unsaturated fats lowers LDL cholesterol.<sup>5</sup> The Canadian Cardiovascular Society recommends healthy eating patterns that emphasize nutritious whole foods and unsaturated fats to help lower LDL cholesterol and prevent heart disease and stroke.<sup>6</sup>

Table 3 shows some common food sources of different types of unsaturated fats including omega-3 and omega-6 polyunsaturated fats and omega-9 monounsaturated fats.

## ESSENTIAL FATS

Two of the polyunsaturated fats found naturally in foods are considered essential to human health because our body cannot make them. These include the omega-3 fatty acid, alpha-linolenic acid (ALA) and the omega-6 fatty acid, linoleic acid.

**TABLE 3 – FOOD SOURCES OF UNSATURATED FATS**

OMEGA-3 (DHA + EPA)	OMEGA-3 (ALA)	OMEGA-6	OMEGA-9
Salmon			Olive oil
Trout	Flax seeds	Corn oil	Canola oil
Tuna	Canola oil	Soybean oil	Safflower oil
Mackerel	Soybean oil	Sunflower oil	Sunflower oil
Herring	Walnuts	Peanut oil	Peanut oil
Naturegg Omega Plus eggs	Omega-3 eggs*	Chicken	Avocados
Naturegg Omega Plus liquid eggs		Regular eggs	Peanut butter
			Most nuts
			Regular eggs

\*Note: Foods generally contain a variety of fats in different amounts. For example, omega-3 eggs contain DHA + EPA as well as ALA omega-3, and omega-6 and omega-9 fatty acids.

## EGGS – A NATURALLY NUTRITIOUS CHOICE

Eggs are a naturally nutritious choice as part of a healthy diet. *Canada's Food Guide* recommends 2 eggs as a serving from the Meat and Alternatives group.<sup>9</sup>

A large egg has just 5 grams of fat, including only 1.5 grams of saturated fat and no trans fat.



# OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

Omega-3 fatty acids benefit health in a number of important ways. There are three main omega-3 fatty acids, including alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA). While most Canadians get the ALA they need from foods,<sup>3</sup> many may benefit from higher intakes of DHA and EPA. DHA is considered a “physiologically essential” nutrient that supports the normal physical development of the brain, eyes and nerves primarily in children under two years of age. Research suggests that higher DHA and EPA intakes may help protect heart health and contribute to optimal health throughout life.<sup>5,8,9</sup>



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## Each large egg provides 13 essential nutrients including:

- › an excellent source of protein
- › vitamins A, D, E, B<sub>12</sub>, and folate
- › minerals like iron and zinc
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