



## LOW FAT DIET - General Information

### Low Fat Diet

#### GENERAL INFORMATION:

##### What is a low fat diet?

- The goal of a low fat diet is to decrease the amount of calories that are eaten from fat. Following this diet may help lower your blood cholesterol (level). Although cholesterol is an important part of each cell in your body, high levels of blood cholesterol increase your risk of heart disease. A diet much saturated (SACH-er-ayt-ed) fat, dietary cholesterol and total fat can lead to high blood cholesterol. High blood cholesterol is often seen in people who are overweight. High blood cholesterol may also run in families. For example, if your parents have it, you are more likely to have it also.
- This diet will show you how to lower the amount of total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol in your diet. This diet will also show you how to include more fiber in your diet. Soluble fiber is one type of fiber that decreases blood cholesterol levels. You may also lose weight by following a low fat diet. Losing weight will reduce your risk of having certain diseases and health problems.

##### What can I do to make a low fat diet part of my lifestyle?

- Changing what you eat and drink may be hard at first. Think of these changes as "lifestyle" changes, not just "diet" changes. You will need to make changes part of your daily routine in order to feel better.
- Choose a variety of items on this diet to avoid getting tired of having the same items every day. Keep a list of items allowed on this diet in your pocket or bag with you about the diet.
- Carry a list of items allowed on this diet to remind you about it when you are away from home. Tell your family or friends about this diet so that they know about it.
- Ask your caregiver, a dietitian (di-uh-TISH-in), or a nutritionist (noo-TRI-shun-ist) any questions you may have about your diet plan. A dietitian or nutritionist works with you to find the right diet plan for you. Dietitians and nutritionists can also help to make your new diet a regular part of your life.

**What should I avoid eating and drinking while following a low fat diet?** Avoid eating foods that are high in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol. Read labels on packaged foods before buying them. Ask your caregiver for more information about how to read food labels. The following foods are very high in fat or cholesterol.

- **Bread and other carbohydrates:**
  - Biscuits, croissants, and store-bought muffins.
  - Cakes, cookies, donuts, pies, pastries.
  - French fries, hash browns and fry bread.
  - Granola.
  - Snack chips.
- **Dairy:**
  - Whole milk, evaporated whole milk, and sweetened condensed milk.
  - Half and half creamer.
  - Hard or semi-soft cheese.



- Ice cream.
- Cheddar cheese soup, or French onion soup topped with cheese.
- Soups made with cream, half and half, or whole milk.
- **Fruits and vegetables:**
  - Fruits baked into high fat desserts, such as pastries, pies, or cakes.
  - Fruit fritters.
  - Fruit ice cream.
  - Avocado (more than one-quarter of an avocado) or guacamole dip.
  - Fried or batter-dipped vegetables, or vegetables prepared with butter, cream, or cheese sauce.
- **Meats and meat substitutes:**
  - Bacon, fatback, ham hocks, or sausages.
  - Fish canned in oil, or ham, cold cuts, or lunchmeats.
  - Hot dogs, spare ribs, chimichangas, and other fried foods.
  - Lamb or mutton, liver, sweetbreads, or organ meats.
  - Cheese dips.
  - Eggs (more than four per week).
- **Fats:**
  - Butter, margarine or shortening with hydrogenated oils or lard.
  - Coconut or coconut milk, or foods containing palm kernel, or coconut oil.
  - Heavy, table, or whipping cream, or regular sour cream or cream cheese.

**What are the types of fat that I should know about?** There are several different kinds of fat that are found in foods. It is important to know how much of each type of fat you should have in your diet. Eating too much of some types of fats may increase your blood cholesterol. Eating the right amount of other types of fat can help keep your cholesterol at the right level. The following are types of fats, and the amounts of each that you should have in your diet:

- **Monounsaturated (mo-noh-un-SACH-er-ayt-ed) fats** are found in olives, peanuts, seeds, and other nuts. These fats do not raise your cholesterol when eaten in moderation (not too much). Include some foods each day that contain monounsaturated fats. Monounsaturated fats should make up 10 to 20 percent of the total number of calories eaten in one day.
- **Polyunsaturated (po-lee-un-SACH-er-ayt-ed) fats** are found in oils such as canola, sunflower, sesame, safflower and other plant oils. Polyunsaturated fats should make up about 10 percent of your calorie intake.
- **Omega-3 (oh-ME-ga 3) fats** are found in certain types of high fat fish, such as salmon, mackerel, and albacore tuna. These fats help protect against heart disease. Eat at least two servings a week of these foods. If you cannot eat fish, talk to your caregiver about using a fish oil supplement (pill).
- **Saturated (SACH-er-ayt-ed) fat** is solid at room temperature, and includes butter, lard, coconut or palm oil, shortening, and some types of margarine. Hydrogenated (hi-DRO-jen-ayt-id) and trans-fats are types of fats that are similar to saturated fats. Eating foods that have these type of fats can increase your cholesterol levels. Saturated fat should make up less than 10 percent of daily calories.
- **Dietary cholesterol** is a type of fat that is found in animal foods including dairy products, meat, fish and poultry. Egg yolks and organ meats (such as liver) are also high in cholesterol. High amounts of dietary cholesterol may increase blood cholesterol in some people. Eat less than 300 mg of cholesterol per day.

**What can I eat and drink while following a low fat diet?** Ask your dietitian or caregiver how many servings to eat each day from each of the following groups. The amount of servings you should eat from each food group will depend on your daily calorie needs. The following is one serving of each food item:

- **Breads and other carbohydrates:** Most people need six to 11 servings of breads and other carbohydrates every day.
  - One slice of bread (four-inch square), or half of a three-inch bagel.
  - One small (two-inch square) dinner roll, or half of a hamburger or hot dog bun, or English muffin.
  - Three-fourths of a cup of flaked cereal, or one-third of a cup of cooked cereal, such as oatmeal or farina.
  - One-half cup of corn or peas, or one medium corn-on-the-cob.
  - One-third cup of cooked pasta or rice, or one-half cup of mashed potatoes, or one three-inch baked potato.
  - Six crackers, or three squares of graham crackers.



- One ounce of fat-free or baked potato chips or corn chips.
- Half of a six-inch piece of pita bread, or one 6-inch round tortilla.
- **Dairy:** Most people need two to three servings of dairy products every day.
  - One cup of skim or one-percent fat milk.
  - One-third cup nonfat dry milk powder.
  - One-half cup of low fat or fat-free frozen yogurt or ice milk.
  - One cup of fat-free yogurt.
- **Fruits:** Most people need two to four servings of fruit every day.
  - One-fourth of a cup of raisins, prunes, or other dried fruit.
  - One-half cup of canned fruit or applesauce.
  - One and one-fourth of a cup of any kind of berries.
  - One and one-half cups of cubed melon.
  - One small banana, or half of a large (nine-inch) banana.
  - One medium (three-inch) apple, peach, or orange.
  - Half of a fresh grapefruit or a large pear.
  - Two small plums or tangerines.
  - Seventeen small or 12 large grapes.
- **Vegetables:** Most people need three to five servings of vegetables every day. One serving of vegetables is one cup of raw vegetables, or one-half cup of cooked vegetables.
  - Salads including greens such as lettuce, spinach, or Romaine, and carrots, broccoli, celery, cucumber, radishes and other raw vegetables.
  - Cooked fresh or frozen vegetables, such as Brussels sprouts, squash, asparagus, eggplant, beets, green beans, and turnips. Choose a brightly-colored vegetables.
- **Meats and meat products:** Most people need two to three servings of meat and meat products every day.
  - Three ounces of chicken or turkey without skin.
  - Three ounces of cooked fish or shellfish.
  - Three ounces of lean beef, pork, low fat ham, turkey, or other deli meats.
  - Three-fourths of a cup of fat-free or low fat cottage or ricotta cheese.
  - One-inch cube or one ounce of low fat cheese.
  - Two tablespoons of low fat Parmesan cheese.
  - Two egg whites, or one half-cup of fat-free egg substitutes.
  - One egg (eat less than four per week).
  - One-half of a cup of cooked dried peas, beans, and lentils.
  - Two tablespoons of peanut butter.
- **Fats:** Most people need one to three servings of fats every day.
  - One-eighth of a medium avocado.
  - One teaspoon of certain oils, such as canola, olive, peanut, soybean, or safflower.
  - One teaspoon of low fat or regular soft margarine or mayonnaise. Buy only margarines that have liquid oils as the first and second ingredients on the food label.
  - One tablespoon of regular salad dressing, or two tablespoons of low fat salad dressing.
  - Two tablespoons of low fat or fat-free sour cream or cream cheese.
  - Two tablespoons of sesame seeds, six almonds, or 10 peanuts.
  - Two teaspoons of peanut butter.

**What are some other ways to decrease the amount of fat in my diet?**



- Keep your total fat intake at about one-third or less of your daily calories. You can do this by eating low fat foods, and avoiding high fat foods. If you eat packaged foods, choose those with less than 30 percent of calories as fat. Read the labels on packaged foods before buying them. Many products offer low fat or fat-free options. Choose low fat or fat-free dairy products. Remember that fat-free does not mean "calorie-free". These foods still contain calories, and calories can lead to weight gain.
- Cut off fat from all meats before cooking them. Remove the skin from poultry (chicken). Do not fry meat, fish, or poultry. Bake, roast, boil, or broil instead. Avoid eating fried foods. Eat a baked potato instead of French fries. Steam vegetables instead of sauteing them in butter.
- Add less fat to foods. Use imitation bacon bits on salads and baked potatoes instead of regular bacon bits. Use low or nonfat butter-flavored toppings instead of regular butter or margarine on popcorn and other foods.

**What can I use to replace high fat items in recipes?** You can replace high fat with low or nonfat items in recipes for baked goods such as cakes. These baked goods tend to be drier than when you use higher fat ingredients. They also may look different than usual. You may need to use nonfat cooking spray on food to prevent sticking. You also may need to change the amount of other ingredients (such as water) in the recipe. Try the following:

- Use low fat or "light" margarine instead of margarine or shortening.
- Use lean ground turkey breast or chicken, or lean ground beef (less than five percent fat) instead of hamburger.
- Add one teaspoon (tsp) of canola oil to eight ounces of skim milk instead of using cream or half and half.
- Use grated zucchini, carrots or apples in breads instead of coconut.
- Use blenderized, low fat cottage cheese, plain tofu, or low fat ricotta cheese instead of cream cheese.
- Add two tablespoons (Tbsp) of nonfat powdered milk to eight ounces of skim milk instead of using evaporated canned milk.
- Use one egg white and one teaspoon of canola oil, or use one-fourth of a cup (two ounces) of fat-free liquid egg substitute instead of a whole egg.
- Replace half of the oil with apple sauce when baking. Use three tablespoons of cocoa powder and one tablespoon of canola oil instead of one ounce of baking chocolate.

**How can I increase the amount of fiber in my diet?** Eat enough high fiber foods to get 20 to 35 grams of fiber every day. To avoid stomach cramps, gas, and constipation, slowly increase your fiber intake. Ask your caregiver for more information about adding fiber to your diet. Following are ways to increase fiber in your diet:

- For breakfast, eat a high-fiber cereal. Oatmeal is a good source of soluble fiber. Look for cereals that have bran or fiber in the name. Choose whole grain products like brown rice, barley and whole wheat pasta.
- Eat whole grain breads like whole wheat bread. Whole wheat, whole-wheat flour, or other whole grains should be listed as the first ingredient on the label. Add bran cereal or unprocessed wheat bran to baked products. Replace whole grain flour for white flour or use half of each when baking bread. Whole grain flour is heavier than white flour so you may have to change your recipe. You may have to add more yeast or baking powder to your recipe.
- Add beans, peas and lentils to your diet. You can do this by adding beans to soups or salads. Beans are also a good source of soluble fiber. Eat different fruits and vegetables each day. Eat fruits and vegetables with the peels (skins) on, such as potatoes, apples, cucumbers, pears, or peaches. Add fruit to your diet by eating them during meals and snacks. A baked potato (with skin) is a good source of soluble fiber.

#### Risks:

- If you are at risk for heart disease and do not follow the diet suggestions made by your caregiver, you may develop serious medical problems. Atherosclerosis (a build-up of fat-like substances in blood vessels) may lead to blood clots, and a heart attack. Heart muscle may be damaged, causing disability, or death. High blood cholesterol puts you at a higher risk of heart attack and stroke. Untreated high blood pressure may lead to a stroke (a clot in the brain). It can also lead to a heart attack, or heart or kidney failure.
- Obesity is linked to heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and certain types of cancer. This includes cancer of the breast, prostate in men. Other health problems linked to obesity include bone and joint problems, breathing problems, and emotional suffering. For more information about following a healthy heart diet contact:
  - American Heart Association National Center  
7272 Greenville Avenue  
Dallas, TX 75231-4596  
Phone: 1-800-242-8721  
Web Address: <http://www.americanheart.org>

#### CARE AGREEMENT:

You have the right to help plan your care. To help with this plan, you must learn about your diet. You can then discuss treatment options with your caregiver to decide what care may be used to treat you. You always have the right to refuse treatment.

