

The Heart Healthy Diet

A closer look at salt, fat and fibre

Salt

Most Canadians get too much salt in their diet. The majority of the salt we eat comes from processed foods (like frozen meals, soups and snacks foods) and foods we eat in restaurants or fast food outlets. We also get salt from many different foods such as bread, cheese and condiments.

Aim for less than 2300 mg/day (1 tsp) of salt (sodium) from all sources.

Some ways to reduce your salt intake:

- Eat processed foods and restaurant foods **less** often.
- Look for products labeled as "reduced sodium", "no sodium" or "no salt added".
- Look for products with a lower number of mg of sodium on the Nutrition Facts table and a lower % DV (Daily Value). For example: 5% DV of sodium is better than 20% DV.
- Use herbs and spices to flavour your food instead of salt. (Eg. Mrs. Dash herb mix). Do not use salt substitutes like potassium salts.

Nutrition Facts	
Per 125 mL (87 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 80	
Fat 0.5 g	1 %
Saturated 0 g	0 %
+ Trans 0 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 0 mg	0 %
Carbohydrate 18 g	6 %
Fibre 2 g	8 %
Sugars 2 g	
Protein 3 g	
Vitamin A 2 %	Vitamin C 10 %
Calcium 0 %	Iron 2 %

Seasoning without salt:

You can use herbs and spices to flavour your food. Try some of these combinations:

Beef: bay leaf, mustard powder, sage, thyme, rosemary, garlic, curry powder, nutmeg

Lamb: curry powder, garlic, oregano, thyme, rosemary, mint jelly

Veal: bay leaf, curry powder, oregano, ginger, lemon

Chicken: lemon, garlic, ginger, rosemary, paprika, parsley, sage, thyme, basil, tarragon

Potato: onion, garlic, parsley, chives

Fish: bay leaf, curry powder, mustard powder, lemon, paprika, dill, lemongrass, ginger

Pork: onion, sage, thyme, oregano, black pepper, apple, applesauce

Rice: chives, green pepper, onion, cinnamon, bay leaf, paprika, cumin

Source: UnlockFood.ca- *Get the Scoop on Salt*



Fat

We need fat for various functions in our body but the type of fat we eat matters. There are three main categories of dietary fats.

Saturated fats come mainly from animal sources and tropical oils (meat, dairy, coconut and palm oils) and are solid at room temperature. Consuming high levels of saturated fat may raise both LDL (“bad”) and HDL (“good”) cholesterol levels in some individuals. While research on saturated fat and cardiovascular disease has shown conflicting results, the general recommendation is to consume saturated fats in **moderation**. Some individuals may benefit from reducing their intake to help reduce LDL levels. There is also evidence that replacing high intakes of saturated fats with unsaturated fats and high fibre foods can be beneficial.

Key points on saturated fat:

- Use in moderation
- Keep portions of meat to the size of the palm of your hand
- Avoid processed meats

Unsaturated fats are found in a variety of foods and oils. Increasing your intake of these fats may help improve cholesterol levels (raise HDL, lower LDL), benefit insulin levels and blood sugar control. Consider replacing some saturated fats with unsaturated fats in your dietary pattern.



- Two notable types of unsaturated fats include: omega 3 and 6 fats.
 - **Omega 3s** may help reduce your risk of heart disease and can lower triglycerides (marine sources). Omega 3s are found in fatty fish such as salmon, trout, mackerel, herrings and sardines. It is also found in some plant sources such as flax, chia seeds, soybeans, walnuts and some vegetable oils. Try to include more omega 3s in your diet.
 - **Omega 6s** are found mostly in liquid vegetable oils such as soybean oil and corn oil. They are also found in some nuts and seeds. We typically get enough omega 6s from our diet. If taking an omega supplement, buy one with only omega 3 (not 3,6,9). **Do not take cod liver oil.**

Tips on adding more unsaturated fats to your diet:

- Have a small portion of unsalted nuts (almonds, walnuts and other varieties) or nut butters every day. Use chia or ground flax seeds (sprinkle or add to food).
- Use unsaturated oils such as olive and canola oil for salad dressings.
- Use avocado in your sandwich instead of butter.
- Use non-hydrogenated or ‘All Natural’ peanut butter on your toast.
- Include fish 2 x per week especially those high in omega 3s like salmon, sardines, herrings, mackerel and trout.

Trans fats are the worst kind of fats because they can decrease our HDL and increase our LDL levels. There is no safe amount of trans fats! Trans fats are often found in shortening or anything labelled as being hydrogenated. Some common offenders: pie crust, cakes, cookies, doughnuts, microwave popcorns, fast foods, deep fried foods.

Tips for avoiding trans fats:

- Read labels! (Look for 0 trans fat).
- Choose only foods that do not have anything listed as hydrogenated on the ingredient list. (Eg. Look for non-hydrogenated margarine if using margarine).

Fibre

Fibre provides many benefits to your health. Diets rich in fibre from whole foods have been shown to help lower cholesterol and blood pressure, regulate blood sugar levels, manage weight, improve digestive health and reduce the risk of conditions like cardiovascular disease, diabetes and certain cancers. There are two types of fibre: **soluble** and **insoluble fibre**. Specifically, soluble fibre has been shown to help reduce LDL levels.

Aim for between 25-38 g of fibre each day. You can increase your fibre intake by consuming more vegetables, fruits, seeds, nuts and whole grains.

Sources of soluble fibre include:

- Vegetables and fruit
- Whole grains (for example: oats and barley)
- Legumes (such as chickpeas, lentils and beans)

Source of Insoluble Fibre:

- Vegetables and fruit
- The bran part of whole grains
- Seeds and nuts

If you are trying to increase your fibre intake, make sure you do so **slowly** and you **drink lots of water**.

