

# Low Fat Cooking and Eating

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For sound nutrition, we only need the equivalent of 3 tablespoons of vegetable oil a day. There is no dietary requirement for saturated fat. Most of us, however, eat far more fat than we need, totaling 6-8 tablespoons each day!

Because of the link between high fat diets and heart disease, cancer, and obesity, it is important to limit our fat intake. Most nutritionists agree that eating no more than 30% of our daily calories from fat sources is a good rule to follow. The following tips can help you trim excess fat calories from your daily intake, while you continue to enjoy the foods you love.

## Start at the Store

Have you ever come home with extra items that weren't on your list? Or do you usually shop without a list? Eating and cooking low fat starts at the store.

Shop with a list. Decide at home what you want to eat for the coming week and purchase only those raw materials. Extra items can add fat calories to your diet and dollars to your food bill.

Shop the perimeter of the store. Vegetables, fruits, meats, dairy, and breads are found around the edges of the store. Rather than travel up and down the aisles, dart in from the perimeter to make these selections.



Trim fat calories by purchasing foods that are naturally low in fat, like fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain bread and cereal products, lean cuts of meat, poultry without skin and fish.

You can also buy low-fat versions of your favorite dairy products. Milk, yogurt and many cheeses now come in low fat or skimmed milk varieties.

## Prepare Food Differently

To further de-fat your food, use cooking techniques that require no added fats. Avoid frying or sautéing food; rather bake, broil or poach it. Food can be poached (lightly simmered) in seasoned water or broth for added flavor and aroma. You can steam or microwave almost any meat or vegetable, both of which retain their nutrients and flavor.



Herbs and spices add interesting flavors to foods and help make margarine, sauces and gravies unnecessary. They can be purchased fresh or freeze-dried, minced or powdered. It works best to experiment with a wide variety like sage, dill, oregano, and chili powder. Instead of using high fat dressings, you can use fresh lemon, lime or vinegar to season salads.

## Moderation

Cutting back is recommended over eliminating certain foods completely. Eat less pizza. Use less butter. Eat fewer chips or cookies, whatever! When you are craving a higher fat snack, have some, just use good judgement and portion control.



Experiment with your favorite meals. Top your baked potato with chives and low fat yogurt, instead of sour cream and butter. Use jam or jelly instead of margarine on toast or bagels. Having good food habits is a key to a healthy lifestyle.

