

THE TRUTH ABOUT FATS

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Apart from trans fats, **fat is good for you**. If you get your calories from fat you will probably put on less weight than if you get the same number of calories from carbohydrates. That's because fats and proteins satisfy our hunger more than starchy carbohydrates and sugars do. However eating too much polyunsaturated fat (the kind that comes mainly from temperate seed-bearing plants - maize/corn oil, soya/soy beans, vegetable/rapeseed/Canola oil, sunflower oil, etc.) causes inflammation and oxidative stress, and that is one of the main reasons that so many people are suffering from diet-related diseases today. 75 years ago people ate mainly saturated fat (the kind that comes from meat, lard, dripping, butter, cream and cheese) and as a result coronary heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and obesity were almost unknown.

Fat is an essential part of our diet, but over the last 100 years four major mistakes have been made.

1. Trans fats.

In 1902 Wilhelm Normann patented a process for thickening vegetable oils and giving them a longer lifespan in order to manufacture a cheaper substitute for butter and lard. Normann's process was called 'hydrogenation', and the resulting new type of fat was called trans fat. In 1911 Proctor and Gamble acquired the patent rights and began to market 'Crisco' for use in cookery and at the table. Over the next 50 or 60 years more and more trans fats were used in food as people replaced animal fats with plant-based ones.

But around 1988 a suspicion arose that trans fats were causing heart disease, and by 1994 it was estimated that in the USA they were causing 30,000 heart disease deaths a year. Nowadays trans fats are all but banned, but they are still used in very small quantities in some spreads and baked products in the USA.

2. Replacing animal fats by vegetable fats was a mistake.

In 1953 an American scientist called Ancel Keys published a paper which appeared to show that saturated fat (which is the main kind of fat found in meat, dripping, lard, butter, milk and cheese) was the main cause of the growing epidemic of coronary heart disease. As a result people ate still less butter, etc., and more and more fat derived from oil-bearing seeds such as maize, oilseed rape, soya beans, ('corn', 'Canola' and 'soybeans' in North America), sunflowers and cottonseeds, etc. These temperate vegetable-based oils consist mainly of polyunsaturated fats, which create two health problems when eaten in excess. One is that they oxidise more easily than saturated fats, especially when heated, producing what are called free radicals that can damage body tissue. The other is that they contain far more omega-6 fatty acids than omega-3 ones, and the resulting imbalance produces internal inflammation that causes a whole host of health problems. Tropical oils such as virgin olive oil, coconut

oil and palm oil don't cause these problems, because they consist mostly of saturated and monounsaturated fats.

3. Encouraging people to lose weight by adopting a low fat diet was a mistake.

Although it would seem obvious that eating fat makes a person fat, the opposite is true, provided of course that one doesn't eat fat in excess. Low-fat foods do not satisfy hunger as much as foods containing larger quantities of fat and protein, and many tests have shown that to lose weight, limiting one's calorie intake on a high fat, high protein diet is more effective than on a low fat, high carbohydrate one.

4. Saying that cholesterol fat is bad for us was a mistake.

The belief that cholesterol causes heart disease and that lowering one's cholesterol level artificially is conducive to health is almost entirely untrue. I've explained this in my book [*Twenty-First Century Nutrition and Family Health*](#).

If you have children, or are hoping to have them, you really ought to read this book and start putting its advice into practice so that your kids don't become overweight or suffer heart attacks because of the kinds of food that the food industry is feeding to most of us nowadays. It's not that expensive. A lifetime of health for the price of a visit to Starbucks is an investment opportunity that it would be irresponsible to ignore!