

Total Fat

What It Is

Fat is found in foods from both **plants and animals**. Total Fat on the Nutrition Facts label includes:

- **Saturated fat** is found in higher proportions in **animal products** and is usually **solid** at room temperature.
- **Trans fat formed naturally** is found in small amounts in dairy products, beef, and lamb. **Trans fat formed artificially during food processing** is found in partially hydrogenated oils, which were used in a variety of foods, such as baked goods, coffee creamer, ready-to use frostings, snack foods, and stick margarine. As of 2018, most uses of partially hydrogenated oils, the major source of artificial *trans* fat in the U.S. food supply, have been phased out. *Trans* fat is also present at very low levels in refined vegetable oils.
- **Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats** are found in higher proportions in **plants** and are usually **liquid** at room temperature as oils.

Where It Is Found

- **Saturated fat** is found in animal fats, baked goods, condiments, gravies, dairy products (whole and 2% reduced-fat), desserts, meats and poultry, processed meats and poultry products, pizza, salad dressings, snack foods, sandwiches, spreads, sweets, tropical plant oils, and vegetable shortening.
- **Trans fat formed naturally** is found in small amounts in dairy products, beef, and lamb. **Trans fat formed artificially during food processing** is found in partially hydrogenated oils, which were used in a variety of foods, such as baked goods, coffee creamer, ready-to use frostings, snack foods, and stick margarine. As of 2018, most uses of partially hydrogenated oils, the major source of artificial *trans* fat in the U.S. food supply, have been phased out. *Trans* fat is also present at very low levels in refined vegetable oils.
- **Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats** are found in avocados, fish, mayonnaise and oil-based salad dressings, nuts, olives, seeds, soft margarines, and vegetable oils.

What It Does

- Fat provides calories, or “energy,” for the body. Each gram of fat provides **9 calories**. Fat also stores energy in excess of what the body needs immediately and serves as a secondary energy source once calories from carbohydrates are used up.
- Fat is a basic part of cell membranes and is necessary for proper growth and development.
- Fat helps the body absorb important fat-soluble vitamins (vitamins A, D, E, and K).
- Fat supports key body processes, such as blood clotting, nervous system function, reproduction, and immune response.
- Fat plays a vital role in maintaining healthy skin and hair.
- Fat in food provides taste and consistency and helps you feel full.

Nutrition Facts	
4 servings per container	
Serving size 1 1/2 cup (208g)	
Amount per serving	
Calories	240
<small>% Daily Value*</small>	
Total Fat 4g	5%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 5mg	2%
Sodium 430mg	19%
Total Carbohydrate 46g	17%
Dietary Fiber 7g	25%
Total Sugars 4g	
Includes 2g Added Sugars	4%
Protein 11g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 6mg	35%
Potassium 240mg	6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.



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Health Facts

- Dietary fat has more than **twice the calories** per gram as either carbohydrate or protein, so calories from fat can add up quickly.
- There is evidence that diets higher in saturated fat and *trans* fat are associated with increased levels of total cholesterol and/or low-density lipoprotein (LDL or “bad”) cholesterol—which, in turn, are associated with an **increased risk of developing cardiovascular disease**. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in both men and women in the U.S.
- *The Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend consuming **less than 10% of calories per day from saturated fat**. In addition, look for ways to replace saturated fat with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats when possible. The guidelines also recommend **keeping the intake of *trans* fat as low as possible** by limiting foods that are sources of artificial *trans* fat.

✓ Action Steps

For Monitoring Total Fat in Your Diet

Use the **Nutrition Facts** label as a tool for monitoring consumption of total fat. The Nutrition Facts label on packaged foods and beverages shows the amount in grams (g) and the % Daily Value (%DV) of total fat per serving of the food.

The Nutrition Facts label also lists the types of fat that make up the total fat in a product. This includes the amount in grams (g) per serving of saturated fat and *trans* fat and the %DV of saturated fat. Food manufacturers may also *voluntarily* list the amount in grams (g) per serving of monounsaturated fat and polyunsaturated fat.

The Daily Value for total fat is 78 g per day. This is based on a 2,000 calorie daily diet—your Daily Value may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

- When comparing and choosing foods, look at the %DV of total fat. And remember:
 - 5% DV or less of total fat per serving is considered low
 - 20% DV or more of total fat per serving is considered high
- Choose lean cuts of meats and poultry. Trim or drain fat from meats before or after cooking and remove poultry skin before eating.
- Try seafood and plant sources of protein (such as soy products and unsalted nuts and seeds) in place of some meats and poultry.
- Substitute fat-free or 1% low-fat dairy products and fortified plant-based beverages (such as soy, rice, and almond) for whole and 2% reduced-fat dairy products.
- Cook and bake with liquid oils (such as canola and olive oil) instead of solid fats (such as butter, lard, and shortening).
- Try baking, broiling, grilling, and steaming. These cooking methods do not add extra fat.
- Limit baked goods, desserts, fried fast foods, and snack foods.
- When eating out, ask which fats are being used to prepare your meal. You can also ask if nutrition information is available to help you make informed choices.