

Saturated Fat

Diets higher in saturated fat are associated with an increased risk of developing cardiovascular disease.

What It Is

Saturated fat is found in higher proportions in **animal products** and is usually **solid at room temperature**. An exception is seafood, which is generally low in saturated fat.

The human body makes all the saturated fat that it needs, so it is not necessary to get saturated fat from food.

Where It Is Found

Saturated fat is found in a variety of foods, including:

- Beef fat (tallow and suet), chicken fat, pork fat (lard), and vegetable shortening
- Baked goods (such as brownies, cakes, cookies, doughnuts, pastries, and pies)
- Condiments, gravies, and salad dressings
- Dairy products (such as whole and 2% reduced-fat milk, cheese, and yogurt)
- Desserts (such as ice cream, other frozen desserts, and puddings)
- Meats and poultry
- Processed meats and poultry products (such as bacon, hot dogs, jerky, some luncheon meats, and sausages)
- Pizza
- Sandwiches (such as burgers, burritos, deli sandwiches, hot dogs, and tacos)
- Snack foods (such as chips, crackers, microwave popcorn, and pretzels)
- Spreads (such as butter, stick margarine, cream cheese, and sour cream)
- Sweets (such as chocolate candies)
- Tropical plant oils (such as coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils)

What It Does

- Like all fats, saturated fat provides calories or “energy” for the body, helps the body absorb certain vitamins, and supports many body processes.

Nutrition Facts

4 servings per container

Serving size 1 1/2 cup (208g)

Amount per serving

Calories 240

% Daily Value*

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.

Saturated fat is a nutrient to get less of.



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Health Facts

- Most Americans exceed the recommended limits for saturated fat in the diet.
- There is evidence that diets in which unsaturated fats (especially polyunsaturated fats) are eaten in place of saturated fat and within the recommended daily limits for calories are associated with reduced blood levels of total cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein (LDL or “bad”) cholesterol—which, in turn, are associated with a **reduced 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 that individuals 2 years of age and older limit saturated fat intake to **less than 10% of calories per day** by replacing saturated fat with unsaturated fats, particularly polyunsaturated fats.

✓ Action Steps

For Reducing Saturated Fat in Your Diet

Use the **Nutrition Facts** label as a tool for reducing consumption of saturated fat. The Nutrition Facts label on food and beverage packages shows the amount in grams (g) and the % Daily Value (%DV) of saturated fat per serving of the food.

The Daily Value for saturated fat is less than 20 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.

- Compare and choose foods to get less than 100% DV of saturated fat each day. And remember:
 - 5% DV or less of saturated fat per serving is considered low
 - 20% DV or more of saturated 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 beans, peas, lentils, tofu and other soy products, and unsalted nuts and seeds) in place of some meats and poultry.
- Substitute fat-free or 1% low-fat dairy products and/or lactose-free versions and fortified soy beverages) for whole and 2% reduced-fat dairy products.
- Switch from stick margarine to soft margarine (liquid, spray, or tub).
- More often cook and bake with liquid vegetable oils higher in polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fat (such as canola and olive oil) instead of fats high in saturated fat (such as butter, lard, shortening, and coconut oil).
- Try baking, broiling, grilling, or steaming. These cooking methods do not add extra fat.
- Instead of creamy salad dressings, make your own flavorful dressings with vinegar and oil (such as olive oil).
- Consume smaller portions of foods and beverages that are higher in saturated fat or consume them less often.
- When eating out, ask which fats are being used to prepare your meal. You can also ask if nutrition information is available and then choose options that are lower in saturated fat.