



EATING 101 RU DINING HEALTHY?

A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE RU HEALTHY DINING TEAM

A Joint Program Between Rutgers Dining Services and The New Jersey Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Health

The Facts on Fat

Does fat make you fat? Some diets suggest limiting fat as much as possible, while others promote consuming large amounts (we're looking at you, keto). The truth is, it's complicated. Fat is an essential part of the diet which provides satiety and flavor, energy to the body, and plays a role in cell function and in the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins. So, cutting it out completely isn't going to do you any favors. That said, consuming too much fat, particularly saturated fats, may lead to weight gain and other adverse health effects. What's the magic number? The Institute of Medicine and American Heart Association recommend that fat makes up 25-35% of *total daily calories*, which is approximately 55-78 grams for the average 2,000 calorie diet (for reference, 1 tablespoon of butter = 12 grams of fat). Read on for tips on how to incorporate the right fats into your diet.



Saturated fats are typically solid at room temperature – think butter, fatty cuts of meat, and cheese. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend limiting saturated fats to no more than 10% of *total calories*.

To limit saturated fat intake, try cooking with vegetable oil instead of butter, choose leaner cuts of meat or plant-based proteins, and when eating foods high in saturated fat, choose smaller portions.

Unsaturated fats are typically liquid at room temperature – think olive oil, and should make up the majority of your fat intake. Some of our favorite foods such as salmon, avocado, and nuts are also rich in unsaturated fats. Try choosing salmon or another fatty fish for dinner a few times each week, top your yogurt or oatmeal with nuts and seeds, or dress your salad with olive oil and vinegar instead of creamier dressings to incorporate more healthy unsaturated fats into your diet.



Omega-3 fatty acids are an essential type of unsaturated fat, which research has shown can improve cardiovascular health. The best source of omega-3 fatty acids is fish, and the American Heart Association recommends eating at least two servings of fish each week to get the recommended amount of omega-3's. If you're not a fan of fish, flaxseeds, chia seeds, and walnuts are also a good source of these beneficial fats.

Avoca-don't skip the fat!

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References: 2020-2025 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans_2020-2025.pdf. Accessed on: February 4, 2022. *Dietary Fats*. <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/fats/dietary-fats>. Accessed on: February 4, 2022. *Saturated Fat*. <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/fats/saturated-fats>. Accessed on: February 4, 2022. *Fat and Calories*. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/4182-fat-and-calories>. Accessed on: February 4, 2022. *Trans fat is double trouble for your heart health*. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/high-blood-cholesterol/in-depth/trans-fat/art-20046114>. Accessed on: February 4, 2022.

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