

## LOWERING THE FAT IN THE DIET

### TYPES OF FAT

There are 3 major types of fat saturated, polyunsaturated and mono-unsaturated:

- Saturated fats are found in foods mainly of animal origin e.g. meat, poultry, eggs, full cream milk and full cream dairy products, takeaway foods and processed meats. There are also 2 vegetable sources of saturated fat palm and coconut oils and fats, which are often used in commercial snack and baked goods.
- Polyunsaturated fats are found in vegetable oils such as sunflower oil, and are also found in fish and polyunsaturated margarines.
- Mono-unsaturated fats are found mainly in plant foods e.g. olive oil, canola oil, nuts and avocado. They are also found in mono-unsaturated margarines.

Polyunsaturated and mono-unsaturated fats are less likely to promote heart disease and should, therefore, be used in preference to saturated fats. They all, however, have the same energy content (number of calories) and should be limited (especially to help control weight).

### WHERE ARE FATS FOUND?

Hidden Fats	Added Fats
Processed meats e.g. salami, bacon, sausages	Butter
Nuts	Oil
Potato crisps and snack foods	Margarine
Cakes and biscuits	Cream
Pastries and pies	Mayonnaise
Chocolates	Salad dressing
Fried and takeaway foods	
Pates & dips	
Full cream cheese, milk and yoghurt	

### WAYS OF REDUCING FAT

To keep the total fat content of your meals as low as possible at all times, remember the following:

- Every meal should consist of two thirds starches, vegetables and fruit and only one third proteins. The protein portion (i.e. meat, fish or chicken) should be no larger than the palm of your hand.
- Only one type of fat should be added to each meal. This means that you should choose to have either margarine OR mayonnaise OR salad dressing OR avocado OR olives etc.

## **HIDDEN FATS**

Try to reduce the intake of hidden fats:

- Fish and chicken should preferably be eaten 2 to 3 times each a week. Red meat should not be eaten more than twice a week.
- Tinned fish should be bought in brine/spring water and not in oil (e. g. tuna and salmon).
- Chicken - the skin and wings contain the most fat and should be AVOIDED.
- Buy lean cuts of meat and trim off all visible fat.
- Topside, aitchbone and venison are very lean.
- Pork is your best choice, followed by beef and then lamb and mutton.
- Minimize use of processed meats such as bacon, salami, sausages, polony and boerewors.
- Eggs - recommended intake is 3-4-eggs per week. Prepare the eggs in a low fat way. For example: boiled, poached or fried in a non-stick pan or with spray and cook instead of margarine or butter.
- Use low fat dairy products such as low fat or fat free milk, yoghurt and cheese.
- Low fat cheeses include low fat or fat free cottage or cream cheese (smooth or chunky), low fat mozzarella, low fat cheese spreads, low fat cheese wedges, low fat Lichten Blanc, low fat Edam, low fat Havarti, ricotta.
- Medium fat cheeses include: Gouda, sweet milk, Camembert, Brie, mozzarella, medium fat Edam, feta, cheese wedges and spreads, Tussers.
- Low fat yoghurt can be plain or flavoured.
- Flavoured milks and drinking yoghurt are available in low fat or fat-free varieties.
- Use low fat or skim milk instead of coffee creamers as these are made from coconut oil and are high in saturated fat.
- Minimize intake of snack foods such as manufactured cakes & biscuits, chocolates, crisps, takeaway foods e.g. chips, hamburgers, pies, pastries and sausage rolls.
- There is no need to buy special "diabetic" foods. Many diabetic products are high in fat and/or nutritive sweeteners such as fructose or sorbitol and should be used with caution (e.g. diabetic chocolate, biscuits, ice cream).
- Minimize the use of commercial pates and dips, and pastry based products e.g. quiche.

## **ADDED FATS**

- If using oil or margarine, choose monounsaturated or polyunsaturated varieties. But remember even these good choices of fat should be limited, particularly if a person is overweight.
- Avoid adding fats to cooked food i.e. margarine, oil, butter, gravies and cream sauces. Try using herbs, spices and low fat alternatives such as low fat yoghurt and ricotta cheese.
- Scrape margarine thinly on bread or go without. Try a spread of ricotta or fat free cream cheese instead.
- Cottage cheese blended with a little low fat milk, onion and herbs makes a delicious topping for baked potatoes instead of butter or sour cream.
- When baking, always use less margarine, butter or oil than stated in the recipe.

## **HEALTHY, LOW FAT COOKING METHODS**

- GRILL - to prevent drying baste or marinate with lemon juice, low fat yoghurt, wine or stock. Add herbs and spices for flavour.
- DRY BAKE - place meat on a rack or cake cooler in a baking dish — this allows excess fat to drain away. Wrap fish in foil to retain juices. Try adding tomato or lemon juice or wine. Season with tomato, onion, capsicum, mushrooms, curry powder, ground black pepper, thyme or oregano. Frozen crumbed or battered fish/meat or chicken is already pre-fried, so bake in the oven without adding extra oil or fat.
- DRY FRY - invest in a non-stick pan. Lean minced meat can be browned on a low heat without added fat. Add wine, water or stock if meat begins to stick.
- POACH - poach fish in wine, tomato or lemon-juice. After cooking the fish, the liquid can be reduced by boiling to make a delicious sauce.
- MICROWAVE - microwave cooking is quick and tasty, and dishes can be prepared with a minimum of fuss in a short time. Meat, fish and vegetables can be prepared without added fat and still retain their juices and flavour.
- STEWS, CURRIES, CASSEROLES - these can be prepared without pre-browning meat, simply cover with vegetables and liquid (stock, wine or vegetable juice) and add favourite seasonings. Leave overnight in the refrigerator to improve flavour prior to cooking. If desired, brush the pan lightly with oil using a pastry brush to brown the meat.
- SOUPS - prepare chicken or meat stock in advance. Refrigerate stock and then skim off any fat that rises to the top. Tomato juice, vegetable juice, tomato paste, or stock cubes can be used as a soup base. Tasty soups can be made using lots of legumes and vegetables without adding any extra fat. Try stirring in low fat yoghurt instead of cream (add just before serving or it will curdle). Replace some of the stock with white wine - it gives a delicious flavour.

- VEGETABLES - stir fry vegetables in a little stock and try adding some fresh ginger for extra flavour. To bake vegetables, use a pastry brush to lightly brush with oil, wrap in foil or dry bake in skins - place on a rack with the meat or on the oven shelf. Add flavour and interest with:
  - Mixed herbs on grilled or baked tomato.
  - Garlic, basil, and low fat French dressing on beans.
  - Lemon juice on broccoli.
  - Chives with potatoes, cabbage or zucchini.
  - Garlic, ground pepper and white wine on mushrooms.
  - A light sprinkle of Parmesan cheese, a spoon of low fat yoghurt or cottage cheese, with chives or parsley on baked vegetables.
  
- SALADS — remember that salads can be VERY HIGH IN FAT; croutons, avocado, nuts, seeds, olives, mayonnaise and salad dressings are all fats. Drizzle the salad dressing over the salad; don't drown it. Use low fat mayonnaise mixed with plain fat free yoghurt for potato salad and coleslaw. Ordinary oil based salad dressings can be high in fat. Alternatives include:
  - A mixture of lemon juice, freshly ground black pepper, garlic, mustard seeds, herbs and a good wine vinegar.
  - Low fat yoghurt spiked with spring onions or garlic.
  - Orange or lemon juice mixed with low fat yoghurt or buttermilk.
  - Tomato juice, fresh herbs, chopped onion, parsley.
  - Commercial varieties-of 'oil-free' 'low-oil', or 'light' dressings and mayonnaise.
  
- DESSERT - include some variety in your desserts
  - Puree fruit with beaten egg white, and freeze to make a refreshing sorbet.
  - Stew or poach fruit.
  - Use skim milk to make custard.
  - Mix jelly with whipped evaporated skim milk to make a delicious mousse.
  - Top desserts with a spoonful of low fat yoghurt instead of cream.
  - Try sugar-free jelly, on its own or set with fruit.