

The Fat Myth

By Christine M. Okezie, CHHC, AADP, CHEF

In our increasingly health conscious world, there is a common misperception that to be lean and healthy we should do everything to minimize or even eliminate fat from our eating. It seems logical, don't eat fat and you won't get fat. However, despite what most doctors, nutritionists and even the US government have preached for years, scientific research shows that it's more than the quantity of fat in your diet, it's the quality of fat that really matters.

Not all fats are created equal. Some fats are good for you and actually lower our risk of disease. Plant based fats, such as extra virgin olive oil, coconut oil, flax seed oil, fats that come from nuts, dark leafy greens and avocado protect your heart and contain powerful disease fighting nutrients. These healthy fats also play a big part in helping you manage your moods, fight fatigue, and even control your weight. They should be consumed at every meal.

In contrast, heavily processed fats and oils such as trans fats, which are found in processed foods, elevate our cholesterol level, contribute to weight gain, heart disease and certain types of cancer. These should always be avoided. Saturated fat such as that found in meat should be minimized.

How much fat is too much depends on your lifestyle, your weight, your age and most importantly the state of your health. The bottom line though is ***don't go No Fat – go Good Fat.***

Tips for Choosing Healthy Fats:

1. Sprinkle ground flaxseed on your yogurt, cereal or on vegetables for a slightly nutty taste.
2. Instead of butter, drizzle flax seed oil and a pinch of sea salt to air popped popcorn.
3. Instead of oily snack foods, choose raw walnuts, Brazil nuts, pecans, almonds and sunflower and pumpkin seeds.
4. Avoid all packaged items that contain hydrogenated oils.
5. Use extra virgin olive oil or flaxseed oil in salads.
6. Eat dark green leafy vegetables like kale, collards and spinach.
7. Eat wild salmon, mackerel, sardines, herring and anchovies.

RECIPE: Creamy Avocado Salad Dressing

Ingredients:

- 1 ripe avocado
- Juice of ½ lime
- 1 tablespoon cilantro, chopped
- 1 small garlic clove, chopped
- 1 teaspoon sweet white miso (to taste)
- ¼ cup of filtered water

Puree all ingredients in a blender until smooth.
Add water to desired consistency.



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