

NUTRITIONAL SERIES

(Number two!)

Fats

Functions of fat:

Fats fulfil many vital functions within the body and form an important aspect of a balanced diet for the following reasons:

- They form an important component of cell membranes or wall
- They help the body to use the fat soluble vitamins- A, D, E, and K
- Provide insulation under the skin
- Provide protection for the internal organs
- Provide energy and a means of energy storage
- They make up the greater percentage of the brain and spinal cord.

There are three basic types of fats you need to understand:

Monounsaturated fats (MUFAs), **polyunsaturated fats** (PUFAs) and **saturated fats** (SATFAs).

MUFAs and PUFAs are good fats; SATFAs are bad fats.

How do you tell a good fat from bad one?

The good fats (MUFAs and PUFAs) are like oil. They flow through your arteries. The bad fats (SATFAs) act like sludge, sticking to the arteries.

Examples are given below:

Saturated fats – meat, eggs, dairy produce, and poultry skin, coconut oil, palm oil;

Monounsaturated fats – meat, olive oil, peanut oil, avocados;

Polyunsaturated fats – oily fish, sunflower seeds, sunflower oil, flax seed.

How much fat should I eat each day?

Carbs and protein both contain 4 calories per gram. Fat contains 9 calories per gram. If you eat the same amount (in weight) of fat as protein or carbs, your calorie intake will be doubled. That is why you should take extra care when eating foods that are high in fat.

Your total fat intake should be no more than 30% of your total calorie intake. If you consume 2.000 calories per day, (multiply 2.000 by 0.30) which tell you that no more than 600 of those calories should come from fat. Since fat contains 9 calories per gram (600 divided by 9) on a 2.000 calories diet, you should take in no more than 66 grams of fat per day. Of the 30% of your calories per day that come from fat, no than 10% come from saturated fats and the other 20% should come from unsaturated sources.