

# Dietary Fat and Weight Loss

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There are some good reasons to minimise the amount of fat in your diet when trying to lose weight:

- **Fat is a concentrated source of kilojoules**

To lose weight you need to reduce the total amount of kilojoules (calories) you eat rather than just simply reducing your fat intake. Fat is, however, a concentrated source of kilojoules and contains more kilojoules per gram than protein or carbohydrate. One gram of fat contains 37kJ compared with 16kJ per gram of carbohydrate and 17kJ per gram of protein. Eating a low fat diet is therefore a good way to control your kilojoule intake.

- **Fat is not burned efficiently**

Fat is not used by the body as effectively as other macronutrients. Carbohydrates and proteins stimulate their own oxidation when eaten in excess of the body's daily needs. Excess dietary fat is not readily oxidised (burned up) and is stored as body fat around the stomach, hips and thighs.

- **Fat doesn't fill you up**

Fatty meals may also be less satisfying when compared with carbohydrate- and protein-containing ones. You tend to feel less 'full' after eating high fat meals.



### Tips to reduce fat intake

- **Shopping**

Become familiar with reading labels and the terms they contain:

#### Label claims

<b>Low in fat</b>	Contains less than 3% fat for solid foods (1.5 per cent for liquid foods).
<b>Fat free</b>	Must be less than 0.15% fat.
<b>Reduced fat</b>	Contain at least 25% less fat than similar versions of the same product.
<b>Light or lite</b>	Doesn't necessarily mean low in fat or energy. The term 'light' may refer to the texture, colour or taste of the product.

- **Cooking**

Try cooking methods which require less fat such as:

- Steaming, grilling, baking, stir-frying, microwaving or using a non-stick fry pan for cooking. For pan frying, use olive or canola oil spray rather than liquid versions.
- Choose lean cuts of meat and poultry and trim off excess fat and skin.
- When roasting or grilling meat use a rack to allow fat to drip away.

- Cook in liquids such as stock, wine, lemon juice and water instead of oil.
- Use low fat yoghurt, corn starch or evaporated skim milk to thicken dishes instead of cream.
- Look for low or reduced fat varieties of milk, yoghurt, cheese, dressings, spreads and pastry.
- **Eating out**
  - When ordering pizza, choose your own toppings. Include plenty of vegetables and limit processed meats and cheese.
  - Hamburgers and steak sandwiches are a better choice if made with salad and pineapple rather than fried egg, bacon and cheese.
  - Baked potatoes are an excellent takeaway choice. Avoid butter and sour cream, and select toppings such as tuna, corn, baked beans and salsa.
  - Doner kebabs and souvlaki can be good options. Ask for extra salad or tabouli rather than lots of meat, and avoid creamy dressings.
  - Fish and chips are high in fat. A better alternative is a fish burger made with grilled fish and plenty of salad. Thicker chips and wedges contain less fat than French fries.
  - Choose pasta with tomato-based sauces rather than creamy sauces.
  - Stir-fried vegetables with steamed rice or noodles are a great way to increase your vegetable consumption while minimising your fat intake.
  - Low fat smoothies, frozen yoghurt, milkshakes and freshly squeezed juices are a good alternative to soft drink and thick shakes.

### Make the switch

Higher fat foods	*Fat (g)	Lower fat foods	*Fat (g)
Toasted muesli	7.8	Natural muesli	3.9
Cappuccino—full cream	3	Cappuccino - skinny	0
Chicken breast— skin on	12	Chicken breast — skin off	7
Yoghurt — regular fat	11.5	Yoghurt — fat free	0
Peanut butter	7.5	Jam	0
Potato chips	23	Pretzels	3
Croissant	15.8	Bagel	1.3
Muffin	27	Hot cross bun	2.8
Cream cheese	6.5	Cottage cheese	1.1
Salami	17.3	Ham	2.9
* Total fat per typical serve			