

The facts about fats and oils



Most of the fats you eat should be polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fats. Oils are the major source of these fats in our diets. Polyunsaturated fats contain essential fatty acids that are vital for good health.

Common cooking oils

Oils are fats that are liquid at room temperature, like the kind used in cooking. Oils come from many different plants and fish. Some common cooking ones are:

- Canola oil
- Corn oil
- Cottonseed oil
- Olive oil
- Safflower oil
- Soybean oil
- Sunflower oil

Common solid fats

Solid fats are fats that are solid at room temperature, like butter and shortening. Solid fats come from many animal foods and can be made from vegetable oils through a process called hydrogenation. Some common ones are:

- Butter
- Beef fat (tallow, suet)
- Chicken fat
- Pork fat (lard)
- Stick margarine
- Shortening



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Moderation is key



Most of us get enough fats and oils in the foods we eat, such as nuts, fish, cooking oils and salad dressings. While eating some fats and oils is essential for health, they contain a large number of calories. In fact, oils and solid fats both have about 120 calories per tablespoon. So, the amount of fat consumed needs to be limited in order to balance total calorie intake. Always check the Nutrition Facts label on foods for details to help you make smart choices.

A person's allowance for fats in their diet depends on age, gender and level of physical activity. Daily allowances* are shown in this chart.

Children	2-3 years old	3 teaspoons
	4-8 years old	4 teaspoons
Girls	9-13 years old	5 teaspoons
	14-18 years old	5 teaspoons
Boys	9-13 years old	5 teaspoons
	14-18 years old	6 teaspoons
Women	19-30 years old	6 teaspoons
	31-50 years old	5 teaspoons
	51+ years old	5 teaspoons
Men	19-30 years old	7 teaspoons
	31-50 years old	6 teaspoons
	51+ years old	6 teaspoons

*These amounts are appropriate for individuals who get less than 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity, beyond normal daily activities. Those who are more physically active may be able to consume more while staying within calorie needs.

Figure out the amount of fat in your diet by using the *Eat Right* tools available through the Personal Health Manager—your online health resource from Blue Access® for Members.