



Lowering the Fat

Lowering the fat in your diet does not mean *no* fat. Fat has important functions—fat provides flavor to food, gives us a sense of fullness in our stomachs, and helps carry certain vitamins in our bodies. However, too much fat can contribute to obesity and health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke and several cancers.

How do you cut back on fat without sacrificing the flavor and enjoyment of eating? It's all about choices, moderation, balance, and small changes over time. Start by selecting foods that are naturally low in fat. Choose whole grain breads, pastas and cereals; fruits and vegetables; lean meats and beans; and low-fat dairy products. Moderation means *limiting* (not *eliminating*) your intake high fat foods like crackers, cookies, cakes and pastries.

Convenience is a key consideration for most consumers, so find a balance between convenience and health. Make fast foods an occasional option rather than the daily fare, and avoid fat packed “super-size” deals. When eating out, look for broiled, baked or roasted items. Salads or lean cooking methods can still be loaded with fat if you're adding extras like salad dressings, gravies, or mayonnaise. Ask for these items on the side so you can limit the amount you use or take advantage of low fat and no fat salad dressings.

Preparing food at home offers you an even wider range of options for reducing fat in foods. Experiment with modifying recipes by selecting low fat ingredients, using lower fat cooking methods or making lower fat substitutions. Start with one or two changes at a time.

Simple substitutions

<i>Instead of:</i>	<i>Try these lower fat alternatives:</i>
Cream	Evaporated skim milk or half and half
Whole milk	Skim or low fat milk
Sour cream	Fat free sour cream or plain, low or non-fat yogurt
Cheese	Reduced fat or part skim cheese
Cream cheese	Low fat ricotta or cottage cheese, or low-fat Neufchatel cheese
Whole egg	2 egg whites or low fat egg substitute
Fat or oil	Use pureed fruit, such as applesauce, prunes, bananas, or peaches, in place of about half the fat in recipes for muffins, pancakes, cookies, breads and other baked goods.
Regular mayonnaise	Reduced fat mayonnaise
Canned or processed meat products	Fresh poultry, fish or lean meat meats
Chocolate chips	Dried fruits and raisins, soy chocolate chips

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Lower fat cooking

- Select lean cuts of meats or trim visible fat before cooking. Take skin off poultry.
- Add more vegetables or starches (rice, pasta, potatoes), and cut down on the amount of meat used per serving.
- Try alternatives to ground beef, such as turkey, chicken, fish or soy based products. Read the label to make sure the fat content is not higher than lean ground beef.
- Roast meat or poultry on a rack in a roasting pan so that the fat drips away during cooking.
- When braising or stewing, get rid of the fat that remains by chilling then removing the hardened fat.
- Broil meat, poultry and vegetables. For less tender cuts of meat, tenderize by scoring, pounding, grinding or marinating before cooking.
- Brown meats in nonstick pans or use a cooking spray, then drain any fat.
- Sauté vegetables with 1 Tablespoon or less of olive oil or use water or chicken broth.
- Steam or microwave.

Lighten up on Sauces, Gravies, and Dressings

- Instead of gravies or creamy sauces, use salsa or relishes made of flavorful fruits and vegetables like pineapple, mango, papaya, bell peppers, etc.
- Try lemon juice or herbed vinegar, reduced calorie or fat free salad dressings.

Lower Fat Baking Tips

- In baked products, try cutting back the fat or oil by one fourth to one third. For example, if the recipe calls for 1 cup of oil or margarine, use 2/3 to 3/4 cup instead. Start gradually and keep track of how much you used so that you can repeat your successes.
- Make one crust or “no crust” pies rather than two crust pies.
- Nuts are high in good fat, but use nuts in modification. Use half the amount of nuts or a cereal like Grape Nuts to keep the crunch without the fat.
- Use nonstick sprays to grease pans.

Remember to choose well, in moderation and balance, and start with small changes.

Understanding the Label

Fat free – A serving has less than 0.5 gram of fat.

Low fat – A serving has 3 grams of fat or less.

Reduced fat – This product has at least 25% less fat than the regular product.

Light (lite) – This product has no more than half the fat of the regular product.

% Fat free – A product must be low fat or fat free and the percentage must accurately reflect the amount of fat in 100 grams of the food.

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