

Good and bad fat: 12 tips for getting the balance right

Try these ideas to get a healthy balance of good and bad fats in your family's daily diet.

1. Breastfeeding gives newborns all the essential [fatty acids](#) in the correct proportions. If your baby is on formula, check with your doctor that it has an appropriate amount of essential fatty acids (the nutrients in most formulas are very similar to breastmilk). Rice and soy milks are not advisable for newborns.
2. Give children full-fat foods when they first start on solids. Littlies need to get energy for their big growth spurts from high-fat foods. Reduced-fat dairy does not have enough vitamins and energy for children under two. Skim milk and dairy products should be given only to children aged five years and older.
3. Offer some reduced-fat milk and dairy products after children turn two, as long as they are getting enough total energy from a wide variety of foods.
4. Introduce low-fat meals for toddlers and preschoolers. Use a wide variety of foods, and try to include a range of fats in your child's diet. This is the age to start developing habits and food choices for life.
5. Omega-3 fat occurs naturally in breastmilk, and is added to formula. Once children are no longer breastfeeding or formula-feeding, offer foods such as tinned fish and vegetable oils to ensure they get enough omega-3.
6. Review your family's daily diet. How many foods do you eat that contain [good fats](#)? How many contain [bad fats](#)? You should try to limit your intake of saturated fats to about 10% of your daily diet.
7. Review the nutrition information panels (NIPs) on your packaged food. The NIPs must list saturated fats separately from total fats. This will help you work out how much saturated fat your family consumes daily.
8. Remove food with bad fats from your family diet. These include fatty cuts of meat, full-fat dairy products, butter, deep-fried foods, commercially produced cakes and biscuits, snack foods and lollies. Replace them with foods with good fats – lean meat, low-fat dairy, margarine made from polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fats, nuts, fresh fruit and

did you know ?

To help your children develop a healthy lifestyle, model healthy choices yourself:

- Eat nutritious food.
- Don't overdo it on junk food.
- Stay active.

vegetables. For treats, try our [carrot and muesli mini muffins](#) or our [strawberry ice blocks](#).

9. When you're shopping, choose foods that have the Heart Foundation's Tick. In general, foods with the Tick have met strict standards for saturated fat and trans fat. The Tick helps you ensure you're making a healthy choice.
10. Set a good example for your children by making healthy food choices yourself. Choose foods with good fat like olive oil, tinned fish, nuts and avocados. Limit processed food.
11. Try to limit 'sometimes' food to once or twice a week. Sometimes food might include takeaway foods, snack and junk foods, cakes and pastries, and ice cream and chocolate.
12. Have fun with food! Trying a range of things can be entertaining and creates a healthy attitude to food.

Rated ★★★★★ (15 ratings)

More to explore

- ▶ Good fat and bad fat: the basics
- ▶ Food portions: 4-7 years
- ▶ Choosing good food
- ▶ Food & recipes
- ▶ Healthy habits for a healthy life: 12 tips
- ★ Junk food
- ▶ About breastmilk
- ▶ Bottle-feeding and formula

Web links

- ▶ Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (PDF doc: 2.1mb)
- ▶ Better Health Channel - Fats and oils

GLOSSARY

essential fatty acids

'Good' or healthy fats that your body needs for nutritional balance. There are two groups of essential fatty acids – omega-3 and omega-6. These contribute to brain and eye development, and reduce the risk of heart disease. Getting the right balance between omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids is important. Omega-3 is found in oily fish, animal and plant sources. Omega-6 is found in fish, margarine, pine nuts and brazil nuts. Breastmilk contains omega-3, omega-6 and other fatty acids, in the right balance for baby. The Heart Foundation recommends eating 2-3 serves of oily fish each week.

Unsaturated fat

Found in oil and vegetable sources and usually liquid at room temperature. There are two different types of unsaturated fats: polyunsaturated and monounsaturated.

Saturated fat

Found in animal products and usually solid at room temperature. Saturated fats can increase bad cholesterol levels, reduce good cholesterol and contribute to the risk of cardiovascular disease.

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