

# Australian Oilseed Federation

## Nutrition Fact Sheets



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### Fat and Heart Disease

Fats play a big role in heart health. If you can get your fat intake right, it will make a huge difference.

If you have high cholesterol, cutting down on saturated fat is a key first step in the process of lowering your total cholesterol and lowering the dangerous LDL-cholesterol.

Eating less fat will also help with shedding weight, if you need to, as fat is kilojoule-dense and is preferentially stored over carbohydrate or protein.

#### Where you'll find saturated fat

Saturated fats tend to be solid at room temperature and are derived from 3 main sources:

1. From meat - solid fat around meat, sausages, deli meats, lard and dripping
2. From dairy sources - butter, cream, cheese, full-fat milk
3. From two vegetable oils used in the food industry:
  - Palm oil (50 per cent saturated) is widely used for deep-frying in fast food outlets and to make snack foods, pastries and biscuits. The saturated fat is 'hidden' in foods like crisps, snack foods, fried take aways, hot chips and meat pies. Palm oil is popular because it is cheap, readily available and has good keeping qualities.
  - Coconut oil (90 per cent saturated) is a fat with unique characteristics needed to make certain types of biscuits, confectionery and fillings for chocolates.

But remember that ALL fats contain a little saturated fat, even olive oil and fish with its heart-healthy omega-3 fats. You cannot completely avoid it even on a healthy diet.

#### How much should I eat?

Healthy heart guidelines recommend you reduce your intake of saturates to less than **10 per cent of the kilojoules** you eat. For a sedentary man consuming 7500 kilojoules (1800 calories) a day, this translates to no more than 20 grams of saturated fat. You can check the saturated fat content of foods on the label.

#### Ways to reduce saturated fats:

- ✓ Switch to low-fat milk, yoghurts and cheese.
- ✓ Avoid butter. Switch to margarine or reduced-fat spread.
- ✓ Use oil for cooking.
- ✓ Buy one of the new oil sprays - ideal when grilling, stir-frying and pan-cooking.
- ✓ Bake your own biscuits or cakes using margarine or oil. Buy bought biscuits, cakes and pastries only occasionally as these are generally made with commercial baking fats which are saturated.
- ✓ Buy lean cuts of meat (look for the Heart Foundation red tick of approval) and remove any visible fat from meat or skin from chicken.
- ✓ Go easy on coconut cream or coconut milk in Thai or Indian dishes. Sometimes there's no other substitute for it, so use half quantity or the light versions.

#### Make sure the fats you eat are unsaturated

Unsaturated fats include both the mono- and polyunsaturated fats found in oils, spreads, nuts, seeds and avocado. Both types are preferred over saturated fats and both lower cholesterol and cut your risk of having a heart attack.