

# FAT

## What has fat got to do with diabetes?

For many years, people with diabetes have been advised to keep their intake of fat to small quantities. There are 2 very important reasons why this has been the case:

### 1. Weight control

Excess body fat, particularly abdominal fat prevents insulin from working properly which leads to raised blood glucose levels. Reducing fat intake, together with more physical activity, will help control weight and therefore help control blood glucose levels.

### 2. Heart disease risk

People with diabetes are at a greater risk of heart disease and circulation problems. Reducing fat, especially saturated fat, will help to reduce this risk.

## Are all the fats the same?

The answer is **YES** and **NO!**

### YES!

All fats are fattening. They are all high in energy (kilojoules) and should therefore be minimized to help control weight.

### NO!

There are three major types of fat, which differ in their effects on heart disease:

- × **Saturated fats** increases risk of heart disease and are best avoided.
- √ **Polyunsaturated and Mono-unsaturated fats** do not increase risk of heart disease and are therefore the preferred choices.

## Where are fats found?

Fats creep into many foods, but can be mostly found in foods from the Eat Moderately and Eat least sections of the Healthy Food pyramid.

### Hidden fats

Processed meats e.g. salami, bacon  
Nuts, avocado, olives  
Potato crisps and snack foods  
Cakes, biscuits (sweet and dry)  
Pastries, croissants  
Chocolates  
Fried and take away foods  
Pate and dips  
Full cream milk, cheese, yoghurt and ice cream

### Added fats

Butter  
Oil  
Margarine  
Cream  
Cofa  
Lard  
Mayonnaise  
Salad dressing



## How to reduce fat!

### Here are some tips to help you to reduce hidden fats:

- ✓ Buy lean cuts of meat
- ✓ Trim visible fat from meat
- ✓ Remove skin from poultry
- ✓ Minimize use of processed meats such as bacon, salami and sausages
- ✓ Use low fat milk, cheese, yoghurt and ice cream
- ✓ Minimize intake of snack foods, such as manufactured cakes and biscuits, chocolates and crisps, and also of take away foods, such as chips, pies and pasties.
- ✓ Minimize use of commercial pates, dips and pastries.

### Here are some tips to help you to reduce added fats:

- ✓ Grill, dry roast, boil, steam, microwave or barbeque instead of frying in fats and oils
- ✓ Avoid adding fats to cooked food, i.e. butter, margarine, gravy or cream sauces. Try using herbs and spices, and low fat alternatives such as low fat yoghurt and ricotta cheese

salad dressings with low joule or low oil varieties, or  
on salads  
saturated margarine thinly on bread, or try a spread of  
of pickles, mustards and relishes can be a delicious  
at.

## What if I don't need to lose weight?

Some people with diabetes may be lean, or struggling to gain or maintain weight. In this situation, more fat may be acceptable as long as it is the right type.

It is still important not to eat large amounts of saturated fat, because of its connection to heart disease.

Larger amounts of mono-unsaturated fats, however, are acceptable. They can help you to maintain or increase weight without increasing the risk of heart disease.

### **Remember, foods that contain mono-unsaturated fat include:**

- ✓ Avocado
  - ✓ Olives
  - ✓ Nuts e.g. peanuts, almonds, cashews, macadamias
  - ✓ Oils such as olive, peanut and canola oils
  - ✓ Margarines that are made from olive, peanut or canola oils
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- ❖ **Try and keep the total amount of fat eaten to small quantities only. This is especially important for people trying to control weight.**
  - ❖ **It is particularly important to minimize saturated fat, which is known to contribute to heart disease.**
  - ❖ **The small amount of fat used should preferably be poly-or mono-unsaturated.**
  - ❖ **For those people who do not need to lose weight, larger amounts of mono-unsaturated fats may be suitable.**