

# CHOLESTEROL & FATS



by the Harvard School of Public Health, Department of Nutrition

## Choose healthy fats, limit saturated fat, and avoid trans fat.

The total amount of fat you eat, whether high or low, isn't really linked with disease. What really matters is the type of fat you eat.

The "bad" fats—saturated and trans fats—increase the risk for certain diseases. The "good" fats—mono-unsaturated and polyunsaturated fats—lower disease risk. The key to a healthy diet is to substitute good fats for bad fats—and to avoid trans fats.

Although it is still important to limit the amount of cholesterol you eat, especially if you have diabetes, dietary cholesterol isn't nearly the villain it's been portrayed to be. Cholesterol in the bloodstream is what's most important. And the biggest influence on blood cholesterol level is the mix of fats in your diet—not the amount of cholesterol you eat from food.

To learn more about CHOLESTEROL & FATS and The Healthy Eating Pyramid, explore "The Nutrition Source" online at: [www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/fats-full-story/index.html](http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/fats-full-story/index.html)

**SEE REVERSE FOR 5 QUICK TIPS**

# 5 QUICK TIPS

## CHOOSING HEALTHY FATS



### ▶ Use liquid plant oils for cooking and baking.

Olive, canola, and other plant-based oils are rich in heart-healthy unsaturated fats. Try dressing up a salad or spring vegetables with a delicious, olive oil-based vinaigrette.

### ▶ Ditch the trans fat.

HUDS has eliminated trans fats from its menu. In the store, read the label to find foods that are trans free. In restaurants, steer clear of fried foods, biscuits, and other baked goods, unless you know that the restaurant has eliminated trans fat. Read more about how to spot trans fats—and how to avoid them.

### ▶ Switch from butter to soft tub margarine.

Choose a product that has 0 grams of trans fat, and scan the ingredient list to make sure it does not contain partially hydrogenated oils.

### ▶ Eat at least one good source of omega-3 fats each day.

Fatty fish, walnuts, and canola oil all provide omega-3 fatty acids. Read more about omega-3 fatty acids and why they are so important to good health.

### ▶ Go lean on meat and milk.

Beef, pork, lamb, and dairy products are high in saturated fat. Choose low-fat milk, and savor full-fat cheeses in small amounts; also, choose lean cuts of meat.