

Low Fat Nutrition Guidelines

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Low Fat Nutrition Guidelines

You may need a low fat eating plan if:

- › You have trouble digesting and absorbing (taking in) fats
- › You have a medical condition like pancreatitis or gall bladder disease

Following a low fat eating plan will still give your body the fat it needs to work well.

For most people, healthy fats are part of a balanced eating plan. **This pamphlet is for people who have trouble digesting and absorbing fat.** Your doctor and dietitian will talk with you about your needs and decide if a low fat eating plan is right for you.

What is fat?

- Fats, carbohydrates, and protein are the 3 main parts of food that give your body energy. Fat supports many body functions, including absorbing vitamins, making hormones, and building healthy cells.

What is a low fat eating plan?

- A low fat eating plan still has small amounts of fat included. Your dietitian will help you decide how much fat you should include each day. Low fat foods include:
 - › Vegetables
 - › Sweet fruits
 - › Pasta, rice, and cereals
 - › Lean meat, fish, and poultry
 - › Low fat dairy products

Tips to help limit fat

Meal spacing

- Eat fats evenly throughout the day. Try eating 5 or 6 small meals or snacks a day instead of 3 big meals.
- **Do not** eat too much at one time. Eating larger amounts of fat at one time can cause symptoms like heartburn, burping, bloating, and stomach pain.

Read food labels carefully

- Read food labels and nutrition claims on food packages.
- Choose foods labelled “fat free”, “0 fat”, “zero fat” or “no fat” most often.
- Foods labelled “low fat” must include **3 grams of fat or less for each serving**. Ask your dietitian if “low fat” choices are right for you.
- Read **Nutrition Facts tables** to check how much fat is in each serving.
Remember: serving size is not always the same as how much you actually eat. For example:
 - › If you are going to eat **half** of the serving, **divide** the amount of fat by 2.
 - › If you are going to eat **double** the serving, **multiply** the amount of fat by 2.

Try to avoid foods with:

- › **More than 5% Daily Value (DV)** of total fat
- › **More than 3 grams** of fat in each serving

Example:

Almond granola

- Amount of food in 1 serving
 - › This is the amount most often eaten.
 - › **Note:** This may not be the serving size you eat.
- Amount of fat in 1 serving
- % Daily Value (DV)

Nutrition Facts Valeur nutritive	
Per 2/3 cup (55 g) / par 2/3 tasse (55 g)	
Amount Teneur	%Daily Value %valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories 260	
Fat / Lipides 10 g	15 %
Saturated / saturés 1 g + Trans / trans 0 g	11 %
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg	
Sodium / Sodium 25 mg	1 %
Carbohydrate / Glucides 35 g	12 %
Fibre / Fibres 6 g	24 %
Sugars / Sucres 10 g	
Protein / Protéines 7 g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	0 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	0 %
Calcium / Calcium	6 %
Iron / Fer	10 %

Rice Krispies

- Amount of food in 1 serving
- Amount of fat in 1 serving
- % Daily Value (DV)

Nutrition Facts Valeur nutritive	
Per 1 1/4 cup (33 g) / par 1 1/4 tasse (33 g)	
Amount Teneur	%Daily Value %valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories 130	
Fat / Lipides 0 g	0 %
Saturated / saturés 0 g + Trans / trans 0 g	0 %
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg	
Sodium / Sodium 190 mg	1 %
Carbohydrate / Glucides 35 g	29 %
Fibre / Fibres 1 g	1 %
Sugars / Sucres 4 g	
Protein / Protéines 2 g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	25 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	25 %
Calcium / Calcium	0 %
Iron / Fer	50 %

- In this example, Rice Krispies is the better choice because it has less than 5% DV of fat and 0 grams of fat in each serving.
- Always remember to adjust the values based on the serving size that you plan to eat, if it is different than the serving amount on the label.
 - › For example, if the serving size is for 1 1/4 cups of Rice Krispies, and you eat 2 1/2 cups, remember the amounts listed on the Nutrition Facts need to be doubled (twice the amount).

Preparing food

- Eat smaller amounts of meat, fish, and poultry. Try to limit to 1 serving at a time (**3 ounces or 90 grams**, or about the size of a deck of cards).
- Choose chicken and fish more often than red meat (like beef, pork, or lamb).
- Take the skin off chicken and turkey before cooking. Choose white breast meat, when possible.
- Cut off all fat from meats before and after cooking.
- You can add flavour to foods that do not have fat by using lemon or lime juice, vinegar, herbs and spices, or fat-free sauces and marinades.

Cooking food

- Use a small amount of non-stick cooking spray to grease pans or baking dishes, instead of fat (like oil, butter, margarine, ghee, shortening, lard).
- Use low fat cooking methods, like baking, roasting, broiling, poaching, steaming, barbecuing, or sauteing (with broth or a small amount of non-stick cooking spray).
- Avoid frying, deep frying, or cooking in a pan using fat.
- Roast meat on a rack so fat can drip off and be thrown away.

Eating out

- Many restaurants have nutrition information available. Ask your server or check online.
- Look for low fat cooking methods, like broiling, baking, or poaching.
- Avoid items that are buttered, breaded, in cream sauce, in gravy, pan fried, fried, deep fried, crispy, au gratin, cheesy, or decadent (rich).
- Ask for food to be made without added fat.
- Ask that potatoes, rice, pasta, and breads be served without butter or oil.
- Ask for dressings to be served on the side. Dip your fork in the dressing before the food (like salad) or limit how much you add.

Choosing foods lower in fat

- The items listed under “Best choices” below are examples of items that are low in fat. Items listed under “Foods to avoid” are high in fat. Use these lists to help you find low fat food options.
- **Note:** some of the items listed under “Foods to avoid” may come in varieties that have less than 5% DV of fat. Always check the Nutrition Facts tables to help you choose.

Best choices	Foods to avoid
Vegetables and fruits • All fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables (except those listed under “Foods to avoid”) • Vegetable juices • Dried fruits • Tomato paste and tomato sauces	• Fruits or vegetables that are: › Fried or deep fried › In pastries › Scalloped › Made with butter, cheese, or cream sauces › Canned in oil • Avocados • Olives • Coconut

Best choices	Foods to avoid
Grain products • Breads and rolls (white or whole grain) with less than 2 grams of fat in each serving • Hot cereals (like oatmeal, Cream of Wheat®, cream of rice), dry cereals (without nuts, seeds, or coconut), and low-fat granola (less than 2 grams of fat in each serving) • Crackers (like Melba toast, soda crackers, graham crackers, rice crackers, rye wafers) with less than 2 grams of fat in each serving • Pasta (white or whole grain) and plain noodles (made without egg yolks) • Rice (except fried rice) • Corn and flour tortillas (not fried) • Barley, quinoa, couscous, and other whole grains • Injera	• Breads, crackers, and popcorn with more than 2 grams of fat in each serving • Muffins, scones, croissants, biscuits, doughnuts, tea biscuits, cheese bread, cornbread, and other pastries • Pancakes and waffles • Cereals with nuts, seeds, and/or coconut, and regular granola with more than 2 grams of fat in each serving • Egg noodles, ramen noodles, and fried rice • Congee • Fried tortillas

Best choices	Foods to avoid
Protein foods: Milk, dairy, and alternatives • Low fat cow's milk (skim or 1% MF [milk fat]), low fat soy milk, oat milk or rice milk • Fat free or low fat yogurt, buttermilk, or evaporated milk (no more than 1% MF) • Fat free dairy and non-dairy creamers • Fat free or low fat cottage cheese, cream cheese, and sour cream (no more than 1% MF) • Fat free or low fat cheese (no more than 20% MF) in small amounts (no more than 1 to 1 ½ ounces [30 to 40 grams] a day) • Low fat cream soups (made with skim or 1% milk) • Puddings or custards made with skim milk • Low fat ice cream or frozen yogurt	• Whole (homogenized) or 2% milk • Regular soy milk • Regular yogurt, ice cream, sour cream, buttermilk, cottage cheese, or cream cheese (2% MF or more) • Regular and full fat cheese products (20% MF or more) • Cream soups (more than 1% MF) • Whipping cream, half and half, and non-dairy creamers (more than 1% MF) • Coconut milk

Best choices	Foods to avoid
Protein foods: Meat, poultry, fish, and legumes • Lower fat fish or shellfish (fresh, frozen unbattered, and/or packed in water or broth), like tilapia, halibut, perch, rockfish, cod, sole, mahi-mahi, pollock, haddock, hake, tuna, shrimp, crab, lobster, clams, scallops, or mussels • Chicken or turkey breast, skinless • Lean sliced, deli-style turkey breast or chicken breast • Lean cuts of meat (like beef, veal, or venison) trimmed of extra fat › Choose red meats with “loin” or “round” in the name and with less visible fat marbling (white streaks of fat) • Extra lean ground meats • Egg whites or low-fat egg substitutes (like Egg Beaters®) • Legumes (like kidney beans, split peas, lentils, chickpeas, baked beans), dried or canned without fat • Tofu	• Highly processed meats (like bacon, sausage, hot dogs, bologna, salami, Spam®, lean deli ham, corned beef) • Chicken or turkey thighs or legs, with skin • Duck or lamb • Red meat with a lot of visible fat marbling, including spareribs and oxtail • Lean, medium, or regular ground meats • Fried or breaded meats and tofu • Higher fat fish (like herring, mackerel, sardines, salmon, catfish, trout, swordfish, canned fish in oil) • Organ meats (like liver, tripe, sweetbreads) • Whole eggs and egg yolks (no more than 1 whole egg or yolk a day) › Low-fat alternative: instead of making omelets with 3 whole eggs, use 1 whole egg and 2 egg whites • Legumes canned with fat (like pork and beans, refried beans) • Peanut or other nut butters (limit to 2 Tbsp a day, spread out across meals) • Nuts and seeds

Best choices	Foods to avoid
Condiments and sauces • Spray oils (like Pam® or Chosen® Foods sprays, or refillable oil spray bottles) • Fat free salad dressings • Fat free gravies and sauces • Fat free mayonnaise • Ketchup, mustard, and relish • Light (low fat) margarine • Soy sauce and teriyaki sauce • Sugar, honey, syrup, and jelly • Vinegar, spices, and herbs	• All oils (including coconut) • Butter, margarine, lard, shortening, ghee • Regular salad dressings • Sauces and gravies made with fat or meat drippings • Some spreads and dips, especially creamy varieties (read food labels carefully)
Snacks and desserts • Air-popped (low fat) popcorn • Baked chips (read food labels carefully) • Fruit leathers • Pretzels • Rice cakes • Saltine and graham crackers • Low fat granola bars (read food labels carefully) • Fat free hot chocolate • Low fat and fat free baking mixes • Plain sugar candies (hard or gummy, not covered in chocolate or caramel) • Angel food cake and sponge cake • Popsicles, sherbet, and sorbet • Jell-O®, puddings (made with non-fat milk), and gelatin desserts • Low fat or fat free ice cream and frozen yogurt (read food labels carefully)	• Candies and chocolate bars with butter, coconut, chocolate, cream, or caramel • Chocolates and caramels • Buttery snack crackers (like Ritz®) • Potato chips, Hawkins Cheezies® • Cakes, cheesecake, pastries, cookies, pies, fruit crisps, and cobblers • Custards • Regular ice cream and frozen yogurt (read food labels carefully)

What are your questions?
Please ask a member of your health care team.
We are here to help you.

Questions for my health care team:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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