

Healthy eating

Tips for reducing fats in your diet

Our diets tend to make us prone to putting on weight because they contain too much fat. Here are some top tips to reduce fat in very simple ways:



Cooking methods

- Don't fry or roast - try grilling, stewing, poaching, steaming, boiling, dry roasting, stir-frying, dry frying, micro-waving or baking in the oven.
- If you want to fry, try using non-stick cookware to reduce the fat needed and let any excess fat drip away before serving.
- Avoid adding extra oil when cooking meat or mince. When you use oil measure it rather than pouring it from the bottle. Choose healthier options such as olive oil, rapeseed oil or canola oil.

Food choices

- Buy reduced-fat and low-fat dairy products - such as skimmed milk, semi-skimmed milk or reduced-fat cheese.
- Choose a low-fat spread rather than butter - olive oil or rapeseed oil based - but remember to still use it sparingly.
- Choose lower fat dressings - avoid mayonnaise and creamy sauces.
- Choose lean meat and mince.
- Prepare meats by trimming off all visible fat, and taking the skin off poultry, before cooking.
- Use stock cubes, stock and corn flour, or a little gravy powder to make gravy, rather than the fatty juices from the meat.
- Replace cream in recipes with low fat natural yogurt, low fat fromage frais, or reduced fat crème fraîche.

- In casseroles and stews use less meat and add more beans, pulses or vegetables.
- For pasta and curry dishes choose tomato or vegetable based sauces rather than cheese or cream based ones.

Don't forget the salt

- Check food labels, and choose those with less added salt.
- Cut down on salty snacks such as crisps/nuts and heavily salted foods such as bacon, cheese and other processed foods.
- Taste your food before you add salt, you may not need it. If you need to add salt during cooking, do not add it again at the table.

Planning healthy lunches

Try to keep lunches between 350 - 500 kcals if you can and snacks to about 100kcal.

Avoid:

- Mayonnaise - it can turn a low-fat tuna sandwich into a lunch laden with unhealthy fats and calories. Choose low fat or healthy alternatives.
- Choose lower fat sandwiches - e.g. don't choose cheese: it might make for a delicious sandwich, but even small amounts will hike up your calorie and fat intake.

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Tips for reducing fats in your diet contd.

Choose:

- Anything around the 350-500 calorie mark - women should have closer to 350 calories for lunch, men nearer 500.
- Sandwiches with plenty of salad.
- Fresh fruit if you fancy something sweet.
- Low glycemic index (GI) carbohydrates such as rye bread, oat cakes, new potatoes, couscous, whole-wheat pasta and brown or wild rice. All are 'slow-release energy foods', which means no sudden sugar highs or lows.
Peanuts are also good.

Additional tips:

- Decide to make one or two changes - like eating an apple or orange each day.
- Prepare your own lunch at least twice a week.
- Make rules you can stick to - at least two wholesome items in every lunch, and a piece of fruit a day.
- On days when you buy a sandwich, go to a place that will make one to order. Ask for extra tomatoes and onions, and low fat mayonnaise. Don't get tuna if it's mixed with lots of mayo.
- Have a piece of fruit or a small serving of low-fat yogurt about an hour before lunch time.
- Don't wait until you're starving hungry. Eat lunch as soon as your stomach lets you know it's in need, otherwise, you may end up eating more than you need.

Healthy lunch options

Pita Breads

Fill pita bread (preferably wholemeal) with as much salad as you can, then top up with either:

- Lean meat, poultry or tinned fish;
- Boiled egg;
- Low-fat cheese (grating makes it go further) or low-fat cream cheese, lightly spread;
- Reduced-fat coleslaw; or
- Add carrots, broccoli, cucumbers, sweet peppers, or a vegetable mixture.

Bagels

For another variation on the standard sandwich, slice a big whole grain bagel in half and spread one side thinly with light cream cheese; then add tomato slices, fresh spinach leaves or other greens, and fresh red onion. The possibilities are endless.

Add to yogurt

Stir in half a cup of low-fat granola cereal; add raisins, chopped walnuts, peanuts, or sunflower seeds.

Peanut Butter sandwich

Peanut butter is full of protein, folic acid, and key minerals. Used in moderation, it's a fine lunch choice.

Watch your snacks

Snacks such as chocolate bars, crisps and biscuits are very high in fat and calories. If you are trying to lose weight you should try to reduce the amount of these foods that you eat. It will be difficult to cut them out completely, so progressively reduce the amount that you are eating over time.

You should think about healthier snacks that are lower in calories and are more likely to satisfy your hunger. Try a fruit or currant bun, bowl of breakfast cereal, plain popcorn, breadsticks, oatcakes or rice cakes, vegetable sticks, fresh fruit or fruit smoothies, dried fruit (such as a small packet of raisins or 4-5 ready to eat dried apricots), low fat yogurt or fromage frais, crackers with low fat cream cheese, or a cup of low calorie soup.

