



The Facts on Fats

The benefits of healthy dietary fats are now discussed with greater frequency. In past decades, the emphasis was on limiting all fats in the diet, including the beneficial sources that our bodies need. Past fad diets, such as The Pritikin Principle, The Good Carbohydrate Revolution, and the ever popular Grapefruit Diet, aimed to eliminate good and bad fats. Research in recent years has focused on the great importance of healthy fats in the diet, placing particular emphasis on providing essential fatty acids for infants and children, since we know that these play key roles in visual and cognitive development. Healthy fat intake has also been linked to a reduction in inflammatory processes and decreased risk for certain types of cancers.

The harsh reality is that American diets typically do not include the appropriate amounts and types of fats. Most people in the U.S. receive the largest percentage of dietary fat intake from trans-fats. These types of fats are prevalent in processed, packaged foods, and almost all fast food. Alternatively, European cultures, especially those with primarily Mediterranean diets, include mono and polyunsaturated fats, from a variety of plant-based sources such as olives and olive oil, avocado, nuts, and seeds. Very little red meat and dairy is consumed, and when it is included it is primarily derived from grass-fed animals, including goats and sheep.

The importance of healthy fats is not stressed enough. Fats are necessary for the function of every cell in our bodies. Fats are one of our primary sources of energy (the other being carbohydrates) and are responsible for the continued maintenance of healthy skin and hair, providing insulation for the body in order to maintain appropriate body temperature, and giving protection to vital organs. Proper intake of fats in a healthy, balanced diet should make up 30% of total caloric intake. That's about double the requirements for protein intake.

However, types of fats to target are important in meeting those needs. Less than 10% of total fat intake should come from saturated sources, which are usually animal derived. Current American diets meet most of their fat intake with primarily saturated fats or trans fats, where the majority of our total fat intake should come from mono and polyunsaturated sources, found primarily in plant-based foods.

The information contained in this Newsletter was prepared from medical and scientific sources which are believed to be accurate and reliable. The information herein should not be used to treat or prevent any medical condition unless it is with the full knowledge, compliance and agreement of your personal physician or licensed healthcare professional.

Volume 1, Issue 7 July 2010

The Facts on Fats – pg. 1
Upcoming Events – pg. 1
Research News – pg. 2
Recipe – pg. 2

Upcoming Events

July 6th

Thoughtful House Community Meeting: *Appropriate, Nutrient-Dense Diets on a Budget* presented by Kirsten Bell, RD

July 7 – 10th

41st Annual National Autism Conference in Dallas, Texas



July 20th

Bonus Community Meeting at Thoughtful House: Lucas Ramirez, FNP to discuss DAN! 2010 Highlights and How to Approach New Treatment Options

July 23rd & 24th

Friday is the lakeside gala at the Rough Hollow Yacht Club benefitting the non-profit *Maggie's Hope*. Saturday come out and see the Thoughtful House booth at **Dell Fox Fit Weekend**. Please visit http://www.myfoxaustin.com/generic/about_us/FOX-7-Fit-Weekend to buy tickets for Friday or register for any of Saturday's events!

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So what fat sources should we avoid, and what is the best way to include healthy fats in our diets?

Aim to eliminate trans fats in your diet. The FDA started requiring manufacturers to identify trans fats on labels in 2006. However, manufacturers are only required to list trans fats from triglycerides, not the potential trans fats that may be produced in processing mono- and diglycerides. So when you see those identified on an ingredient list, the product may not, in fact, be trans fat-free.

It has become even more difficult to identify foods containing these substances since labeling was required because manufacturers can label their product “trans fat free” as long as there is < 1 g of trans fats per serving. So there may be 0.98 or so grams of trans fats per serving in a “trans fat-free” product.

What is the overall concern with trans fats in our diets? The best answer is that the body cannot process these chemical structures because they are man-made and not something the body is naturally meant to utilize and process. Trans fats are hydrogenated

oils. To create these, a plant-based oil, such as soybean oil, is processed by adding a hydrogen bonds to its carbon structure to make it a more “saturated fat”. These chemical structures are not familiar to our bodies and may have harmful effects, such as increasing the risk of cancer.

Focus on limiting saturated fat intake from animal sources, such as red meat and dairy. Plant-based sources of saturated fat, such as the saturated fats in coconut oil, are healthier choices for most than a diet heavy in animal fats.

Include healthy, plant - based oils when cooking and baking. Try smoothies with 1 tsp olive oil or ½ tsp avocado oil, or salad dressings using hazelnut oil.

Watch the temperatures when cooking with oils. Every oil has a unique smoke point. This is the temperature at which the oil’s chemical structure changes and the oil begins to smoke. Once this change occurs, the oil is no longer beneficial to your health, and has most likely become a carcinogen.

Smoke point resource:

www.spectrumorganics.com -
Kitchen Guide

Chicken Pasta

with creamy walnut sauce

1/3 cup walnuts
1 clove garlic
¼ tsp sea salt
¼ tsp fresh ground pepper
¼ tsp cayenne pepper
¼ chicken broth (homemade if possible)
2 tbsp finely chopped fresh flat leaf parsley
½ tsp fresh lemon juice
1 tsp walnut oil
8 oz boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into ½ pieces
4 oz pasta
1 cup broccoli
½ seeded red bell pepper

Boil pasta. Blend broth, walnuts, garlic, salt, pepper, and cayenne in blender. In a separate pan, heat chicken pieces (medium heat) until no longer pink in the middle. Add bell peppers and broccoli in the last couple of minutes. Cook until slightly tender. Drain pasta, add chicken, bell peppers, and broccoli, and toss with creamy walnut sauce.

Variations:

Add yellow and orange bell pepper, spinach, or kale for added vitamins and minerals.

Use a homemade chicken bone broth if possible for additional calcium and other minerals.

Substitute turkey for chicken or pecans in place of walnuts.

In research news.... A study by a research team in Spain provided supporting evidence to their hypothesis that the protective benefits of olive oil may be related to gene expression changes occurring following the consumption of olive oil in a meal. Six healthy males were provided with a 50 mL dose of olive oil in a fasting state following a one week period on a limited dietary protocol that allowed fat derived only from sunflower oil. Gene expression was evaluated prior to ingestion (0 hour) and again 6 hours following ingestion of the olive oil. Nutrient gene reactions were noted in those genes integral in metabolism, cancer, inflammation, atherosclerosis, and other cellular processes. Therefore, it could be concluded that appropriate monounsaturated fat intake may promote protective genetic changes in the body, helping decrease the risk of inflammatory diseases and cancer- demonstrating that fat is not always a foe.