

Breakthrough common nutrition myths, see what's trending, catch up on latest research, and get great tips from our team of Registered Dietitians.

MYTH

If a food is low in fat or fat-free, it must be healthy.

FACT

Just because a food is low in fat or fat-free doesn't mean it's healthy. In fact, a lot of foods that are low in fat are not healthy choices, such as candy, pop, low-fat cookies and fat-free frozen treats. While these foods may have little fat, they can still be high in sugar and calories and offer few, if any, nutrients. There are, however, some foods that are higher in fat and a healthy choice, such as fish, avocados, nuts, seeds and nut butters. Choose foods wisely: Read food labels and consider a food's overall nutrient content. Don't judge a food by fat alone!



Heart Health Awareness

Egg-cellent News!

For 70% of the population, eating foods higher in cholesterol does not result in a jump in blood cholesterol. Our body needs 1300 mg per day for proper functioning; if we eat more cholesterol our bodies produce less, and vice versa. A 2013 meta-analysis found that consuming one egg a day, did not show an increased risk of coronary heart disease or stroke. However, due to the increased risk of heart disease in patients with diabetes, there is need for further research within this population group.

Rong Ying, Chen Li, Zhu Tingting, Song Yadong, Yu Miao, Shan Zhilei et al. Egg consumption and risk of coronary heart disease and stroke: dose-response meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies *BMJ* 2013;; 346:e8539 <http://www.bmj.com/content/346/bmj.e8539>

Saturated fat and cardiovascular disease: Then and Now (2016). Presentation by, Andrew JW Samis BSc(Hon), MSc, MD, PhD, FCCP, FRCSC, FACS, Assistant Professor, Department of Surgery, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Cracking the Coconut Oil Controversy

Coconut oil has gained popularity in recent years. Coconut oil is about 92% saturated fat (whereas butter is 64% and beef is 40%). Recently, scientists and health organizations have contrasting opinions on the effects of coconut oil and other saturated fats on heart health. Some researchers believe that saturated fats are not associated with heart disease and stroke, while others still recommend limiting saturated fat intake to reduce coronary vascular disease (CVD) risk. Coconut oil is especially controversial because of its high concentration of lauric acid. Some studies have shown that lauric acid does raise total cholesterol, but it appears to raise HDL cholesterol to an even greater extent than LDL cholesterol. Researchers are unclear if this increase in HDL favourably affects heart health.

Population studies of societies in which coconut products make up a large part of the traditional diet have been observed to have less CVD. However, these diets are typically high in heart-healthy foods, like vegetables and fish, and low in processed foods. Other factors like daily activity, genetics and being a non-smoker may also counteract the effects of a diet high in saturated fat, and may explain the low incidence of heart disease. Population studies are a good starting point for research, but they can only prove a correlation, not a causation.

While coconut oil may not be as harmful as once thought, research remains inconclusive about its impact on cardiovascular disease. Also note that many coconut oil products are highly processed and refined, so using the less processed (virgin) oils is a better choice, as the fatty acids will be closer to their original form and the oil will contain more phytonutrients. Until more research emerges (especially large randomized controlled studies), use coconut oil in moderation.

<http://www.todaysdietitian.com/newarchives/1016p32.shtml>

Butter is Not Back

Not all fat is created equal. Butter is primarily made up of saturated fat which is associated with an increased risk of heart disease. Replacing saturated fats with whole grains, legumes, and unsaturated fats from vegetable oils, nuts and seeds, and seafood, reduces one's risk of heart disease and insulin resistance. On the other hand, replacing saturated fats with processed refined carbohydrates and sugars will not reduce heart disease risk. Margarine has evolved over the years; today, most margarines are non-hydrogenated (and are therefore free of trans fats) and are made from heart-healthy vegetable oils. Deciding whether to use butter or margarine is a personal choice. However, the best option may be to focus on including more monounsaturated fats, such as olive oil, avocado, and nut butters.

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/314339.php>

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/2016/06/30/we-repeat-butter-is-not-back/>

Saturated Fat from Dairy vs. Red Meat

Interesting research suggests that dairy fat may not be as harmful as once believed. There is now some research to suggest that dairy can actually reduce cardiovascular disease risk. Interestingly, a 2012 study by De Oliveira et al, found increased dairy fat reduced CVD risk, whereas increased meat saturated fat increased CVD risk. Why is this? We are unsure at this point. As of right now, more research is needed to determine the extent of these associations, and no causal conclusions can be made.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3396447/>

https://www.dairynutrition.ca/bundles/dfcdairynutrition/pdf/en/symposium_presentations_2016.pdf

Bottom Line: An increasingly consistent message from cardiovascular researchers and health experts is that overall dietary patterns—rather than individual nutrients—hold the key to better health. Dietary patterns consistently associated with good health tend to be minimally processed, naturally low in saturated fat, low in salt and sugar and free of trans fat. Examples include DASH (dietary approaches to stop hypertension), Mediterranean diet for heart healthy eating and the Brazil's proposed dietary guidelines. This basically refers to having regular daily activity, being wary of food advertising and marketing and keeping foods wholesome. Focus on planning minimally processed meals, with lots of fruit and vegetables, choose lean meats and have some meatless meals (i.e., legumes or lentils), include omega 3-rich fish 2-3 servings per week, and select whole grains. Enjoy preparing meals with friends and family and adapt your eating environment to support healthy eating patterns.

Talk to your Registered Dietitian for more information.

Coming Up:

March is Nutrition Month!

Take the pledge to take the fight out of food.

Take the Recipe Challenge to earn points towards the HFHT's Survival of the FHT-est Team Trophy!

Celebrate National Dietitian Day on March 15th!



Recipe of the Month

Oats and Blueberry Breakfast Parfait

(SensibleFoodie.ca)

Ingredients

½ cup low fat plain yogurt
¼ cup large flake oats
2 tbsp dried blue berries
2 tbsp slices almonds
1-2 tsp maple syrup

Instructions

- 1) Place yogurt in a small serving bowl
- 2) Top with all the remaining ingredients in order and drizzle on the maple syrup

**can substitute dried berries for fresh



Want your patients to learn more about healthy recipes?

Refer them to our monthly Cooking Demonstrations!

NEW in 2017 is our **3-week cooking series** on improving blood sugars!

Open to anyone who wants to increase their confidence in the kitchen and learn how to better manage their blood sugar through good nutrition. Ask your Registered Dietitian for more information or call 905-667-4863 or email nutrition.groups@hamiltonfht.ca



Hamilton Family Health Team

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