

# Nutrition and MyPyramid: Oils

Oils are fats that are liquid at room temperature. This food group includes oils you cook with, plus foods that are mostly oil, such as mayonnaise and salad dressing. Oils give the body vitamin E and essential fatty acids, which keep cells and tissues healthy and help the body heal. But oils and other fats are high in calories. Eating too much fat leads to weight gain and increased risk of heart disease. MyPyramid recommends having only 6 teaspoons of oils a day. You probably already get this much in the food you eat.



## Fat Facts

Some fats are liquid. Others are solid. And all of them can be bad for you if you eat too much. Food labels tell you which fats a food contains. Some are more healthy than others:

- **Unsaturated fats** are found in some oils (such as olive, peanut, and canola), nuts, seeds, and fish. These are the healthiest fats. They can be good for your heart in moderate amounts.
- **Saturated fats** are found in animal foods such as butter, lard, beef, and high-fat dairy. These are less healthy, and should be limited.
- **Trans fats** are found in French fries and other fast food, snack foods (like chips and cookies), and some margarines and shortenings. These are the worst fats for you. Avoid them when you can.

## Be Smart About Fats

- **Out with the Bad:** Check food labels for trans fats. And stay away from foods that have them. Trans fats are mostly found in processed foods. So, getting back to basics is a great way to avoid them!
- **In with the Good:** Choose unsaturated fat over saturated when you can. Here's one idea: Cook with olive or canola oil instead of lard or butter. What else could you do?

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