



**Dear EAT RIGHT MONTANA Friend:**

Welcome to number eight in **EAT RIGHT MONTANA's Real Guidelines for Real People** series. This issue focuses on the "fat" guideline: **Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat.**

Dietary advice on fats, cholesterol and heart-smart eating is confusing for many consumers (and for some health providers as well), because:

- \* The terminology is complex and unfamiliar to the average American eater.
- \* Guidelines may differ between leading health groups like NCEP and AHA.
- \* Some experts fail to translate guidelines into practical, realistic advice.
- \* Healthy adults try to follow advice meant for those with heart disease.
- \* Adult recommendations are sometimes mistakenly applied to children.

As nutrition communicators, our mission is to cut through the clutter and clear up the confusion in people's minds. One way that we can help is to use "consumer-ese" rather than the nutrition lingo we speak with each other. People do not eat numbers or chemical compounds - they eat food. We must be prepared to translate scientific research and terminology into realistic suggestions for everyday choices in supermarkets, kitchens and restaurants.

We hope that this month's ERM materials will help make your messages more effective and your communication job easier. You may also want to check out these sites for the latest information about fat and health:

\* **American Heart Association (AHA)** has an excellent newsroom and a free personalized consumer program (One Of A Kind) @

<http://www.americanheart.org/>

\* **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** offers many links and cool, interactive state maps with CVD data @

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/cvd/>

\* **National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP)** provides info for media, consumers, and professionals @

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/cholesterol/>

**As always, we welcome your suggestions and comments.**

**Crystelle Fogle** (406) 444-2672   **Katie Bark** (406) 994-5641  
**Dayle Hayes** (406) 655-9082 ~  
<mailto:EatRightMT2000@aol.com>

## **New Research about Fats in Food**

### **Trans fats may be harder on the arteries than saturated fat.**

A study in the July issue of *Atherosclerosis, Thrombosis and Vascular Biology* found that trans fats - found in margarine, packaged baked goods and restaurant fried foods - reduced blood vessel function by a third and lowered good cholesterol by a fifth compared to saturated fats. This suggests that trans fats increase the risk of CVD more than saturated fats.

[http://www.americanheart.org/Whats\\_News/AHA\\_News\\_Releases/](http://www.americanheart.org/Whats_News/AHA_News_Releases/)

### **High-density lipoprotein cholesterol may have multiple positive effects.**

Scientists at Univ. of Texas Southwestern Medical Center have discovered that HDL triggers a process that keeps arteries clean and flexible. The study reveals a new mechanism by which HDL provides benefits to vascular health. Not only is HDL a taxi to remove cholesterol from the body, it also causes arterial walls to dramatically increase their production of beneficial nitric oxide. [http://www.utsouthwestern.edu/home\\_pages/news/](http://www.utsouthwestern.edu/home_pages/news/)

### **Use of food labels found to help reduce fat intake.**

A study in the July *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* showed that those who paid attention to food labels had larger decreases in fat intake over 2 years. Since food labels had their greatest impact among women, older people and more highly educated people, the authors note that efforts to promote healthful dietary change must do a better job reaching men, younger persons, and persons who are less well educated.

[http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory\\_2794.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_2794.html)

### **Rice flour may help lower fat content in popular fried-foods.**

Research at the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) suggests that rice may someday help people enjoy lower-fat French fries and doughnuts. As reported in the *Journal of Food Science*, fries made from rice flour absorb less oil and produce a lower-fat, lower-calorie version than those made potatoes. Rice "fries" match the texture and flavor of the traditional fries. Donuts partially made with rice flour absorbed up to 64% less oil during frying - while maintaining the "desirable characteristics" of regular donuts.

[http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory\\_2784.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_2784.html)

**Provided by Eat Right Montana**



**Real Guidelines for Real People: Straight facts about fat**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**                      **CONTACT: Crystelle Fogle, MBA, RD**  
**MT Dept. Public Health and Human Services – 406/444-2672**

## **Healthy Families 2001: Making sensible fat choices (8<sup>th</sup> in series of 12)**

If you're confused about fat and health, you're not alone. Butter or margarine? Olive or corn oil? Red meat or fish? Saturated, unsaturated or trans fats? Sometimes it's hard to make the right choice.

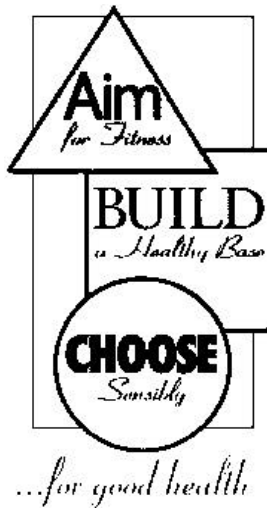
"Dietary advice is constantly evolving as we learn from research," says Crystelle Fogle, MS, RD, registered dietitian with the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. "People do get confused and fed up with what seems to be conflicting nutrition advice. Fortunately, we have some simple strategies for Montanans who want to eat right and make sensible choices about fat in food."

The keys to making sensible food choices are balance and moderation. Experts agree that high fat choices can be balanced with lots of low-fat foods like fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Research has also shown that all fats are not created equal, notes Fogle. "We need to eat less of the saturated fat in full-fat dairy foods and some meats. We also need to cut back on the trans fats found in deep-fried fast foods, stick margarines and commercial baked products like pastries, cookies and crackers."

Eat Right Montana, a statewide coalition promoting healthful eating and active lifestyles, urges all Montanans practice moderation. Even healthful fats - like those in olive, peanut and canola oil, avocados, seeds, and nuts - can supply unwanted calories when eaten in large portions.

"Science has shown that some unsaturated fats provide impressive health benefits," says Fogle. "However, it's not healthful to soak your bread in olive oil or to eat a jar of peanuts while watching TV."

Making sensible fat choices means using small amounts of olive oil to lightly sauté veggies or dress some salad greens. It can also mean a sprinkling of sunflower seeds on a tuna casserole or a slice of avocado on a lean roast beef sandwich. The secret is to enjoy all foods without overdoing it.



## Real Guidelines for Real People: Making Sensible Fat Choices

Choosing the right types and amounts of fat for good health can seem confusing. All those numbers can be difficult to understand, and sometimes the experts seem to flip-flop their advice on a daily basis.

The good news is that sensible fat choices are easier and better tasting than most people imagine. Healthy adults and kids do not have to follow a restrictive, fat-free diet or give up their favorite foods.

As you make food and menu choices for your family, moderation and balance are two words to keep in mind. All foods, even high-fat foods, can be enjoyed in moderation. Just don't overdo it!

Experts do agree that your best bet is to balance higher fat foods with lower fat choices. It is also important to balance the different types of fat you eat.

**NOTE:** If you have heart disease or a family history of heart problems, talk with your health care provider or a registered dietitian (RD) to choose the right eating plan for you.

## Ten easy ways to choose foods sensibly.

### 1. Choose **LEAN MEATS**.

- ✓ It's easy to cut back on fat and still enjoy the ZIP (zinc, iron and protein) found in beef and pork. Choose cuts from the round and loin, like sirloin or top round, and use low-fat cooking methods like grilling or roasting.

### 2. Choose **SKINLESS POULTRY**.

- ✓ Trimming the skin and fat - before or after cooking - from chicken and turkey removes most of the saturated fat. Choosing white meat rather than dark meat will reduce your fat intake even farther.

### 3. Choose **FATTY FISH**.

- ✓ The omega-3 fats in fish help protect against heart disease, arthritis and other problems. For a rich source, choose fattier fish (herring, salmon, mackerel and bluefish). Even canned tuna is a reasonably good source.

### 4. Choose **EGGS OCCASIONALLY**.

- ✓ Moderation is one of the keys to sensible choices. Go easy on high-cholesterol foods like egg yolks, liver and other organ meats. A daily egg yolk probably has little effect on the heart disease risk of healthy people.

### 5. Choose **LOW or FAT-FREE MILK PRODUCTS**.

- ✓ Your dairy case is packed with reduced-fat, nutrient-dense options. To maximize calcium and protein and minimize saturated fat, choose fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, "half and half" and ice cream.

**6. Choose REDUCED-FAT or SHARP CHEESE.**

- ✓ Look for natural part-skim cheeses like mozzarella and low-fat types, like 2% cheddar. When you use full-fat cheese, choose sharp (for more flavor with smaller amounts) and shredded (small amounts go farther).

**7. Choose COOKING SPRAYS for frying and baking.**

- ✓ Today's cooking sprays are more versatile than ever - with olive oil, garlic and lemon-flavored varieties. Use them to coat frying and baking pans - and to keep meats and veggies from sticking to the grill.

**8. Choose SOFT SPREADS and MARGARINES.**

- ✓ If you use very small servings, it's probably ok to use any spread, even butter. To minimize saturated and trans fats, choose tub, liquid or spray instead of stick spreads. Look for margarines labeled as "trans-free."

**9. Choose LIGHT DRESSINGS.**

- ✓ Choosing salad dressings sensibly means going light on the amount you use and finding a light variety that you enjoy. To cut back on dressing even more, sprinkle on a spoonful of flavorful cheese, nuts or seeds.

**10. Choose LOW-FAT TOPPINGS.**

- ✓ The saturated fat in whipped cream, sour cream and cream cheese can add up quickly. However, there's no need to give up flavor, taste or pleasure. Choose a low-fat variety and enjoy in sensible portion sizes.

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For more tips on making tasty, healthy fat choices, click on:

- American Heart Association's Delicious Decisions

<http://www.deliciousdecisions.org/>

- Cooking Light Magazine Online

<http://www.cookinglight.com>

- FoodFit

<http://www.foodfit.com>  
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**Celebrating Healthy Families 2001**



## Straight Facts about Fat and Cholesterol

In the fight against disease, fat and cholesterol have been the "enemy" for years. There's no doubt that eating too much fat can contribute to health problems, like heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity. However, fat and cholesterol both have important functions in your body. The key is to find the right balance of foods to maximize your health. Here are some important facts about fat and cholesterol.

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### In Foods

**Dietary cholesterol** is found only in animal foods, like meat, poultry, fish, milk and eggs. Nutrition experts recommended a cholesterol intake of 300 milligrams or less per day.

**Saturated fat** is a type of fat found in meat, poultry, cheese, butter and coconut oil. Foods high in saturated fats are usually solid at room temperature. Since your body can manufacture cholesterol from saturated fat, eating less can help reduce your risk of heart disease.

**Monounsaturated fats** are found in oils (olive, canola and peanut), avocados, most nuts and some margarines. Often called "good" fats, they help lower LDL (bad) cholesterol without reducing levels of HDL (good) cholesterol.

**Polyunsaturated fats** are found in corn, safflower, sunflower, and soybean oils as well as most margarines and seafood. They tend to lower both good and bad blood cholesterol. One specific type, called **omega-3 fatty acids**, may be especially helpful in reducing the risk of chronic diseases. Fatty fish and flaxseed are high in omega-3s.

**Trans-fatty acids** seem to be double trouble, lowering HDL and raising LDL at the same time. Trans-fats are found in

margarine, fast-food fries, crackers, cookies, pastries and other baked foods.

### In Your Body

**Blood (serum) cholesterol** is the number called "total cholesterol" on lab tests. Your liver makes most of this cholesterol; while a small amount is absorbed from the foods you eat. Your body uses cholesterol to produce bile and hormones, and to synthesize vitamin D. The cholesterol you eat has only a minimal effect on the cholesterol found in your blood. In your blood, cholesterol moves around in different forms, some of which affect your risk of disease.

**HDL cholesterol** is often called "good" cholesterol. High HDL cholesterol levels are associated with a lower risk of heart disease – since this cholesterol is on its way out of your body.

**LDL cholesterol**, often-labeled "bad" cholesterol, is the most common type of cholesterol found in the blood. High LDL levels can cause cholesterol to stick to artery walls, forming a "plaque." This cholesterol buildup can eventually clog arteries, causing heart disease or stroke.

**Triglycerides** are another name for the fats found in food and in your blood.

High triglyceride levels can also cause health problems.

**NOTE: Always discuss your blood test results with your health care provider.**



**Celebrating  
Healthy Families  
2001**

# **Healthy Families 2001:**

## **Real Guidelines for Real People**

**January 2001**

- **The New Dietary Guidelines: What's in them for you?**

**February 2001**

- **Aim for a Healthy Weight: Getting real about weight management**

**March 2001**

- **Be Physically Active Each Day: Spring into fun and fitness**

**April 2001**

- **Let the Pyramid Guide Your Food Choices: Build a tasty eating style**

**May 2001**

- **Choose a Variety of Grains: Great grains for life**

**June 2001**

- **Choose a Variety of Fruits and Vegetables: 5 A Day and beyond**

**July 2001**

- **Keep Food Safe to Eat: Putting safety first**

**August 2001**

- **Making Sensible Fat Choices: Straight facts on fat**

**September 2001**

- **Making Sensible Sugar Choices: Straight scoop on sugar**

**October 2001**

- **Making Sensible Sodium Choices: Straight shake on salt**

**November 2001**

- **Making Sensible Beverage Choices: A toast to your health**

**December 2001**

- **Year-Round Health: Real guidelines for real health**



**EAT RIGHT MONTANA**

*A coalition promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles*