UNDERSTANDING DIETARY FATS

Dietary fat, also called lipids, are found in the foods we eat. Dietary fat is a macronutrient that provides energy to the body. While some fat is necessary for our overall body’s functioning, there are different types of fats and therefore both healthier and unhealthy fat choices.

Healthy Fats

MONOUNSATURATED FATTY ACIDS AND POLYUNSATURATED FATTY ACIDS

Most foods rich in these fats are liquid at room temperature (e.g. canola oil, olive oil, peanut oil, sunflower oil). Eating foods rich in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids may help improve cholesterol levels which can decrease your risk of heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

Omega 3 fatty acids can be found in fatty fish (e.g. salmon, tuna, trout) and plant food sources (e.g. ground flaxseed, canola or soybean oils, nuts and other seeds). Omega-3’s can be heart healthy by decreasing the risk of coronary artery disease.

Unhealthy Fats

SATURATED FAT

Saturated fat mainly comes from animal sources such as meat, poultry, and full-fat dairy products. It can increase your risk of cardiovascular disease by raising cholesterol levels (both HDL and LDL) in the body.

TRANS FAT

Most trans fats are made from oils during food processing. Trans fats can also increase LDL and decrease HDL cholesterol in the body, thereby increasing your risk of cardiovascular disease.

RESOURCES
Mayo Clinic