

Lifestyle Coach Facilitation Guide: Post-Core

Fats - Saturated, Unsaturated, and Trans Fat

Content Overview

This session answers the question “what is fat?” It explores the different types of fat, and shows which fats are healthy (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated) and which fats are unhealthy (saturated and trans fat). Participants learn tips for choosing foods with healthy fats and avoiding foods with unhealthy fats. More information on cholesterol appears in Post-Core Session: Heart Health.

Lifestyle Coach Preparation Checklist

Materials

- ☐ Post-core handouts:
 - What is Fat?
 - Healthy Fats: Omega-3, Monounsaturated and Polyunsaturated
 - Fats to Avoid: Saturated and Trans Fat
 - Identifying Healthier Alternatives
 - Tips for Choosing the Best Types of Fat
- ☐ “Food and Activity Trackers”
- ☐ “Lifestyle Coach’s Log”
- ☐ Balance scale

Post-Core: Fats – Saturated, Unsaturated, and Trans Fat

Key messages to reinforce

- A completely fat-free diet would not be healthy, yet it is important that fat be consumed in moderation.
- The main types of “healthy” fats are monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. The main types of “unhealthy” fats are saturated and trans fat.
- Saturated fats are primarily found in foods that come from animals, such as meat and dairy. Try to switch to lower-fat versions of these foods.
- In order to avoid trans fat, look on nutrition labels for ingredients such as “partially hydrogenated” oils or shortening. In addition, look for trans fat in the nutritional information in products like commercially baked cookies, crackers, and pies, and fried foods.

After the session

At the completion of this session, do the following:

- ☐ Use the “Notes and Homework Page” for notes and follow-up tasks.
- ☐ Distribute 4 “Food and Activity Trackers” for the following month.



What is Fat?

Our body needs us to consume fat in order to work properly. Fat comes from a variety of food groups, particularly the milk, meat, and oils food groups. It can also be found in many fried foods, baked goods, and pre-packaged foods.

Fat is a major source of energy and helps your body absorb vitamins. It is also important for proper growth, and for keeping you healthy. A completely fat-free diet would not be healthy, yet it is important that fat be consumed in moderation.

It is important to keep in mind that fat has the most calories compared to any other nutrient. Controlling fat intake is one of the most important steps in losing or maintaining weight and preventing or delaying type 2 diabetes.

How does fat affect my health?

Since our bodies only need a certain amount of fat each day, any extra that is consumed is stored in fat tissue and contributes to weight gain. Fat also affects our hearts, but the effect depends on which kind of fat you are eating.

What are the different types of fat, and which are healthy?

There are four main types of fat:

1. Monounsaturated fat } **HEALTHY fats**

3. Saturated fat } **UNHEALTHY fats**

The goal is to try to **choose more of the healthier fats, eat fewer unhealthy fats, and stay within your fat gram goal.**



Healthy Fats: Omega-3, Monounsaturated, and Polyunsaturated

Omega-3 fatty acids are an especially heart healthy fat and can help with lowering high triglyceride values in your blood. Omega-3 fats can be found in:

- **Fish:** salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines, albacore tuna, and rainbow trout
- **Tofu** and other soybean products
- **Walnuts**
- **Flaxseed** and flaxseed oil
- **Canola oil**

Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat are considered “heart healthy” and can help with improving cholesterol when used in place of unhealthy fats. Some sources of these fats include:

- **Avocado**
- **Nuts and seeds:** almonds, cashews, pecans, peanuts, pine nuts, pumpkin, sesame seeds, or sunflower seeds
- **Olive oil and olives**
- **Oils:** vegetable oils (such as sunflower, safflower, corn, soybean, and cottonseed)
- **Peanut butter**

Source: American Diabetes Association



Fats to Avoid: Saturated and Trans Fat

Saturated Fats are mainly found in foods that come from animals (such as meat and dairy), but they can also be found in most fried foods and some prepackaged foods. Saturated fats are unhealthy because they increase LDL (“bad” cholesterol) levels in your body and increase your risk for heart disease. Many saturated fats are “solid” fats that you can see, such as the fat in meat. Other sources of saturated fats include:

- High-fat **cheeses**
- High-fat cuts of **meat**
- Whole-fat **milk** and **cream**
- **Butter**
- **Ice cream** and ice cream products
- **Palm** and **coconut oils**

Trans fat is simply liquid oils turned into solid fats during food processing. There is also a small amount of trans fat that occurs naturally in some meat and dairy products, but those found in processed foods tend to be the most harmful to your health.

Trans fats serve up a double whammy to your cholesterol, by increasing LDL (“bad” cholesterol) and decreasing HDL (“healthy” cholesterol).

In order to avoid trans fat, look on nutrition labels for ingredients such as “**partially hydrogenated**” oils or **shortening**. In addition, look for trans fat in the nutritional information in products, such as commercially baked cookies, crackers, and pies, and fried foods.



Identifying Healthier Alternatives

Foods High in Saturated Fat	Healthier Alternatives
Instead of...	Use...
Butter, lard, shortening, coconut, coconut oil, palm oil	Margarine (look for 0 grams of trans fat on label), vegetable oil spread, olive oil, canola oil, corn oil, canola oil cooking spray
Whole milk, 2% milk, half & half, cream	Skim, 1%, fat free half & half
Red meat, ground beef, sausage, bacon, organ meats (such as liver, kidney)	White meat chicken, turkey, pork chop with fat trimmed, ground beef sirloin, fish, soy products, nuts/seeds or beans
Poultry skin, visible meat fat	Skinless and trimmed meats
Fried or pan fried foods	Grilled, baked, roasted, steamed, broiled, boiled
Deli meats like bologna, pepperoni, salami	Deli ham, turkey, chicken breast or extra lean roast beef
Whole eggs or egg yolks	Egg substitute or egg whites
Ice cream	Frozen yogurt, sherbet, low-fat ice cream
Cheese, cottage cheese, sour cream, cream cheese, whipped cream	Fat free or reduced fat version
Chocolates, pies, doughnuts, brownies, buttered popcorn	Sugar free pudding made with 1% or skim milk, vanilla wafers, animal crackers, low-fat microwave popcorn



Additional Tips for Choosing the Best Types of Fat

Limit the amount of fat you eat, but don't try to cut it out completely. Focus on reducing foods high in saturated fat, trans fat.

Present: While taking into consideration the health implications of the different types of fat, the key to weight loss is to stay within your fat gram and calorie goals, regardless of which type of fat you eat.

Here are a few more tips for choosing the best types of fat.

- ☑ Choose leaner cuts of meat that do not have much visible fat. Leaner cuts include round cuts and sirloin cuts. Trim visible fat off meats before eating.
- ☑ Sauté with olive oil or canola oil instead of butter.
- ☑ Use olive oil in salad dressings and marinades.
- ☑ Use canola oil when baking.
- ☑ When re-heating soups or stews, skim the solid fats from the top before heating.
- ☑ Sprinkle slivered nuts or sunflower seeds on salads instead of bacon bits.
- ☑ Snack on a small handful of nuts rather than potato chips or processed crackers.
- ☑ Try peanut butter or other nut-butter spreads (which do not contain trans fat) on celery, bananas, or low-fat crackers.
- ☑ Add slices of avocado rather than cheese to your sandwich.
- ☑ Once or twice a week prepare fish, such as salmon or mackerel, instead of meat.

Follow Up _____

Notes and Homework Page

While it is fresh in your mind, use this page to write down notes about the session. Consider what worked, what you need to do differently for the next session, whom you need to follow up with, information or ideas needing further research, and general concerns or issues that need to be addressed.

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