

Healthy Fats

Fats are an essential part of our diet and are important for good health. People with cystic fibrosis (CF) have long been advised to follow a high fat diet to help meet increased energy needs and achieve a healthy weight.

Individuals with CF should try to choose nutritious foods and drinks to meet individual energy needs. Providing they are not overweight or at risk of becoming overweight or obese, fat intake in people with CF should not be restricted, however the source and quality of fat should be considered. Polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats are preferred over saturated and trans fats because of their potential health benefits.

Monounsaturated Fats

Monounsaturated fats are also beneficial to heart health and can lower cholesterol. Common sources include:

- Avocados.
- Almonds, cashews, macadamia and peanuts.
- Cooking oils made from plants or seeds like canola, olive, peanut, soybean, rice bran, sesame, sunflower oils.

Polyunsaturated Fats

Polyunsaturated fats can help to lower cholesterol and improve heart health. Common sources include:

- Oily fish (salmon, tuna, herring and sardines).
- Tahini (sesame and spread).



- Linseed (flaxseed) and chia seeds.
- Soybean, sunflower, safflower, grapeseed and canola oil and margarine spreads made from these oils.
- Pine nuts, walnuts, hazelnuts and brazil nuts.

Omega - 3 Fats

Omega - 3 fats are a type of polyunsaturated fat that may be especially beneficial to heart health.

Common sources include:

- Oily fish (tuna, salmon, sardines and blue mackerel)
- Other seafood including barramundi, flat head, scallops and mussels
- Walnuts, linseed (flaxseed) and chia
- Oils and spreads made from canola and soybean
- Eggs, chicken and beef

Saturated Fats

Eating a lot of saturated fat can increase total blood cholesterol levels and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol also commonly known as 'bad' cholesterol. Common sources include:

- Processed foods like biscuits, cakes and pastries.
- Visible fat on meat and chicken and processed meats such as salami and sausages.
- Full-fat dairy products including milk, cheese, cream, ice-cream and yoghurt.
- Butter, lard and copha.
- Some plant foods like palm and coconut oil.

Despite being called a superfood, it is important to know that coconut oil contains 92% saturated fat. Therefore, it should only be used from time to time, and preferably in small amounts. For your main cooking, stick to healthier alternatives, namely olive and canola oil (Heart Foundation, 2017).

Trans Fats

Trans fats are considered the least nutritionally beneficial source of fat. They have been shown to cause an increase in 'bad' cholesterol and a reduction in heart-friendly cholesterol. Common sources include:

- Deep-fried foods
- Baked foods like biscuits, cakes, pastries and buns
- Small amounts naturally in dairy product, beef, veal and lamb

Useful Resources

- [CFFood \(CFWA\)](#)
- [CFCooking \(CFWA\)](#)
- [CFWA Nutrition Factsheets](#)
- [The Heart Foundation](#)

Thank you to Jordan Henderson, Clinical Dietitian, Sir Charles Gairdner Hospital, for input into this factsheet.

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