

# Healthy Eating

## Fat: It's A Matter Of Balance

(NAPSA)—For years, we have been told to avoid “fat” at all costs under the common misconception that “eating fat will make you fat.” High-fat but nutritious foods like avocado and nuts were lumped together with less healthy high-fat fare like bacon, butter and red meat. However, recent studies indicate that not all fats are created equal. While it is important to manage the amount of fat you eat, you also need to be mindful of the types of fat you eat. If you find a good balance, you can enjoy the foods you like that contain the “good” fats.

Recent research indicates that foods high in mono- and polyunsaturated fatty acids (MUFAs and PUFAs) contribute to a healthier diet. Research has shown that these “good” unsaturated fats decrease total cholesterol and LDL (“bad”) cholesterol. On the other hand, watch out for foods high in “bad” fats such as saturated fats and trans fats. These “bad” fats are known to increase total and LDL cholesterol, which puts us at a higher risk for developing heart disease.

Recently, this science has prompted government agencies and health organizations to revise dietary recommendations, and put more emphasis on the type of fats we eat, while encouraging consumers to substitute “bad” fats with “good” fats. Research has shown, for example, that MUFAs and PUFAs, unsaturated fats, may have a beneficial effect on health if they replace saturated and trans fats in the diet. In fact, it is estimated that substituting 5 percent of calories from saturated fats with 5 percent of calories from unsaturated fats could decrease the risk for coronary heart disease by 42 percent and that substituting 2 percent of calories from trans fats with 2 percent of calories from unsaturated fats will reduce the risk by 53 percent.

The key is to replace fats in the diet, not add them. The more total fat you eat, the more calories you



**Scientists say you can enjoy fun foods made with “good” fats and still have a healthy diet.**

are taking in. For example, leave the butter—a saturated fat—off the top of a mixed vegetable side dish and instead sprinkle in a few sliced almonds, which are rich in unsaturated fats. And rather than topping your tossed salad with bacon, also high in saturated fat, choose olives, which are higher in unsaturated fats, instead.

Oils are another important source of fats in the diet. You often think of oils as those you use for cooking or those found in salad dressings, but another source of oils in the diet is packaged foods. Oils can also consist of “good” fats or “bad” fats so it’s important to look at the Nutrition Facts panel of packaged goods to identify those that use unsaturated oils, such as canola and corn oils. For example, Lay’s potato chips are now cooked in heart-healthy sunflower oil—an oil that is made up of mostly the “good” fats—mono- and polyunsaturated fats. The company’s move to sunflower oil has reduced the saturated fat in Lay’s potato chips by more than 50 percent, while increasing the “good” fats.

Remember that the key is to substitute unsaturated fats and oils into the diet, not just add them to what you eat. Understanding that the type of fat is important, not the amount of fat, is one of the biggest steps you can take to be on your way to achieving a more optimal and balanced diet.