

# Heart Healthy Choices

## The Top Five Fat Myths Busted

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(NAPSA)—For years, people have been advised to cut fat out of their diets, but now, guidelines from the American Heart Association have been revised to recommend that the right type of fats can play an important role in a healthy diet.



**Dr. Mitchell**

Here are five fat myths and the facts to help clear up the confusion:

**Myth # 1. Eating fat makes you fat.** Because fat has more calories per gram than the two other nutrients that contribute calories (protein and carbohydrate), some people think eating fat will make you fat. However, if you are concerned about maintaining or losing weight, it's the total number of calories you eat every day that will impact your waistline.

**Myth #2. The amount of fat is more important than the type of fat.** Researchers now recognize that the amount of fat should no longer be seen as the main factor in preventing heart disease. Instead, the type of fat consumed is most important. Health benefits are seen when “bad” fats—trans and saturated fats—are replaced with mono- and polyunsaturated fats, also known as “good” fats. The key is to not add fats to the diet; rather, substitute “bad” fats with “good” fats.

**Myth # 3. Baked is better.** Baked chips are often recommended because they tend to be lower in fat. So if you are looking to lower fat intake, baked products may be a good option; however, baked doesn't necessarily mean they are significantly lower in calories. At the same time, fried chips can have some nutritional value depending on the oil used. For example, Frito-Lay cooks all its snack chips in sunflower or corn oil,



**Choose snacks made with a heart-healthy oil such as corn or sunflower oil.**

which are high in the “good” mono- and polyunsaturated fats, low in saturated fat and have 0 grams of trans fat. These “good” fats can have heart-health benefits.

**Myth # 4. Olive oil is the only good oil.** While olive oil has received a great deal of attention, there are a number of oils that are high in “good” fats and low in “bad” fats. Corn, sunflower and canola oils are not only higher in “good” fats, they are also lower in saturated fat and contain 0 grams of trans fat.

**Myth #5. You only need to worry about trans fat.** Trans fat is proven to have a detrimental effect on your health, but intakes of saturated fat should also be limited. Although food companies are removing trans fat from their products, they don't always replace “bad” fats with “good” fats. Check nutrition labels for 0 trans fat, but also make sure there aren't any oils high in saturated fats, such as coconut and palm kernel oil.

*Dr. Mitchell serves on the health and medical advisory board of Family Circle magazine and is co-author of three books: “Fat Is Not Your Fate,” “I'd Kill for a Cookie” and “Eat to Stay Young.”*