



Just the Facts!

Limit Saturated Fat for Healthier School Meals

KEY ISSUES:

- To help lower saturated fat in school meals, serve lean meats; encourage more fruits, vegetables, dry beans and peas (legumes), and whole grains; and serve only fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk.
- Help protect students' hearts by serving foods containing or prepared with healthy oils rather than saturated fats or trans fats.

Choose one of these:

Soft tub margarine

Canola oil

Corn oil

Cottonseed oil

Olive oil

Safflower oil

Sunflower oil

Some foods are naturally high in healthy oils:

- Nuts
- Olives
- Some fish
- Avocados

Instead of any of these:

Beef, pork, & chicken fat

Butter, cream, & milk fat

Coconut, palm, & palm kernel oils

Hydrogenated oil

Partially hydrogenated oil

Shortening

When it comes to heart health, the type and amount of fat we eat in food make a big difference. Most Americans need to decrease their intakes of foods containing saturated fat to lower the risk of heart disease. Most of the saturated fat in our diet comes from cheese and other higher fat dairy products, beef, and baked goods like cakes, cookies, and doughnuts. Foods higher in saturated fat usually contain more cholesterol, too.

Many students can fill up on the extra calories from saturated fats and then not get the nutrients they need to grow and be healthy. These extra calories from saturated fats also make it harder for students to grow at a healthy weight. You can help by offering students fewer foods that are high in saturated fats or replacing saturated fats with oils. Look for the amount of “saturated fat,” “*trans* fat,” and “cholesterol” per serving listed on the Nutrition Facts label. Choose foods that have the least amount of all three. The school meal patterns require that less than 10 percent of calories for both breakfast and lunch come from saturated fat.

Easy ways to follow the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

Recipe for Success

- **Skip butter and cream in sauces** or as a seasoning for vegetables. Try herbs and spices to add more flavor without the fat. If you need to use some fat, try oils with healthier fats, such as olive or canola oils.
- **Choose lean cuts of meats with minimal visible fat.** Trim away all of the visible fat from meat and poultry before cooking. Remove the skin on poultry.
- **Prepare fish baked, broiled, or grilled** rather than breaded and fried.
- **Offer fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk and yogurt.** They're rich in protein, calcium, and other nutrients and lower in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- **Try low-fat cottage cheese,** part-skim mozzarella, ricotta, and other low-fat or reduced-fat cheeses.



USDA Foods Program

USDA has reduced or eliminated saturated fat and cholesterol in foods offered to schools. Shortening and butter are no longer available. Processors now use lean meat in place of skin and fat in processed poultry products. Schools can order lean meats, fish, and poultry items, part-skim mozzarella cheese, and other reduced-fat and reduced-sodium cheeses through the USDA Foods Program. To check the list of available USDA Foods, go to the USDA Foods Toolkit at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/healthy/Professional.htm> to review the Foods Available List for Schools.

- **Avoid using too many processed foods**, especially meats including sausage, hotdogs, bologna, and salami - even those with “reduced fat” labels - they may still be high in calories, saturated fat, and cholesterol. Serve grilled, skinless chicken breast or ground turkey.
- **Avoid certain bakery products** like doughnuts, pies, cakes, cookies, and crackers, which may contain saturated fat and trans fat. Have fruit for a sweet treat instead of baked goods.

see some more ideas on the next page . . .

Did You Know?

- **Saturated fats are solid at room temperature.** Examples include butter (milk fat), beef fat, chicken fat, pork fat (lard, bacon), and stick margarine. The fat in milk is saturated fat, even though it is suspended in the milk. To reduce saturated fat and meet the meal pattern requirements, schools should serve only fat-free (skim) and low-fat (1%) milk.
- **Eating foods high in saturated fat is associated with higher levels of total cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol in the blood.** Higher total and LDL cholesterol levels can put people at greater risk for heart disease. Too much LDL cholesterol can slowly clog the arteries supplying blood to the heart and brain. This increases your risk for a heart attack or stroke.
- **Some condiments with less saturated fat** include oil-based salad dressings, low-fat mayonnaise, and soft (tub) margarine with no trans fat.

Messages for Students

- **Want a crunchy addition to your salad?** Try a small scoop of nuts. Nuts provide healthy oils and are high in protein, leaving you feeling satisfied.
- **Did you eat pizza yesterday?** Try something different today, like roasted chicken and sweet potatoes!
- **Grab a handful of nuts and fruit** for a smart snack.



For More Information:

Team Nutrition (<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>)
USDA Choose MyPlate (www.ChooseMyPlate.gov)
MyPlate (<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/myplate.html>)
Let's Eat for the Health of It (<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/letseat.html>)
Changing the Scene – Improving the School Nutrition Environment (<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/changing.html>)
USDA Recipe Finder (<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/schoolmeals/Recipes/recipefinder.php>)
Read It! Poster (http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/read_it.html)
Trimming the Fat (<http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20120102035517.pdf>)

- **Here are some more ideas** to help you choose foods lower in saturated fats for students:

Use:	Instead Of:
Part-skim mozzarella or other low-fat cheeses, and foods containing fat-free, low-fat, and reduced-fat cheeses	Regular, full-fat cheese and foods containing full-fat cheese
Grilled, baked, broiled, or roasted chicken or fish	Fried chicken or fried fish
Baked potatoes or baked sweet potatoes	French fries or fried white potatoes
Baked chips or whole-grain crackers	Potato chips, tortilla chips, or corn chips
Unbreaded, grilled chicken breasts or fish filets to make fajitas or tacos. Baked fish filets with lemon and herbs or tomato salsa.	Breaded meat products (such as chicken nuggets or fish sticks) or other highly processed meat items (such as sausage, bacon, or hot dogs)
Beans and peas without adding butter, lard, margarine, or other sources of saturated fats	Regular ground beef and cuts of meat with marbling or visible fat
Fruits (fresh, frozen, or canned) or foods with whole-grain flour (or graham flour) as the first ingredient, such as graham crackers or plain animal crackers.	Doughnuts, pies, cookies, or cakes for dessert
Fat-free or low-fat plain yogurt, frozen fruits, or frozen 100% fruit bars with no added sugar	Ice cream, frozen yogurt, or full-fat yogurt
Hummus (puréed garbanzo beans) or avocado	Butter or stick margarine as spreads or toppings
Vegetable oils, such as canola, olive, safflower, or corn oil; soft (tub) margarines with zero <i>trans</i> fats; unsweetened apple sauce	Butter, stick margarine, or shortening for cooking and baking