



The Fat Panel
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Experts vow to combat the nation's fat ignorance

Ninety seven per cent of people are thoroughly confused about what fats they should, or should not, be eating according to new research commissioned by The Fat Panel.

The findings reveal that not only do people not realise that fat can be good for them, they also don't even realise which fats are good and which are bad. Without understanding, people cannot make wise dietary choices.

So, to clear up this fatty minefield, leading nutritional and medical experts have joined forces to educate the public on the fat facts by launching The Fat Panel.

The Fat Panel is a new, independent, group, which will provide objective information about the important role, and benefits, of oils and fats and how we can all get it right. It brings together experts in the areas of lipid metabolism, public health, general practice, nutrition and pharmacy.

Panel member Dr Sarah Berry, of Kings College, London said: "Fat is considered the 'baddie' of our diet, with many people trying to cut it out their diets completely. However, a moderate amount of the right kind of fat in our diet can actually be really good for us. Most of us should worry a little more about the type of fat we are consuming rather than how much.

"The Fat Panel commissioned this survey of 551 adults in the UK to highlight the depth of people's confusion about dietary fats."

According to the survey, the public's confusion continues right down to what types of fat are contained in which foods.

While most of those quizzed correctly identify lard, butter, pastry and meat products as being high in saturated fats (92%; 91%; 90%, 88%), 40 per cent also incorrectly thought that spreads are high in saturated fats. Liquid vegetable oils and spreads are actually a healthy way to get the guideline daily amount (GDA) of fat - with added benefits too.

Less than half of those questioned recognise that saturated fat is very bad for their health - more than 10 per cent thought it is actually good for them.

While four out of five people do not realise that trans fatty acids (TFAs) are potentially very bad for health - one in six (16%) think TFAs are good for us.

Nearly a quarter think that essential fatty acids, like omega-3 are bad for our health and 30 per cent think that monounsaturated fats are bad for health.

Around half of respondents do not realise that dietary fat is important for:

- * Tissue repair
- * Healthy skin
- * Protecting the internal organs
- * Transporting vitamins around the body
- * Hormone metabolism

And almost half of respondents do not realise that cutting saturated fat intake will reduce the risk of developing cardiovascular disease, diabetes and some cancers.

But more than one in five (22%) think that cutting saturated fat in their diet will improve their love lives!

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For further information please contact:

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. The Fat Panel is a group of independent medical and nutritional experts available for comment on dietary fats and oils.
2. The Fat Panel is supported by an educational grant from the trade association for the UK spreads industry.
3. The Fat Panel commissioned a survey of 551 adults in the UK to illustrate people's confusion about dietary fats.
4. Members of The Fat Panel are:
 - * Dr Sarah Berry BSc, MSc, PhD, Rnutr is a registered nutritionist working at Kings College. Sarah's specialist area of knowledge and research is lipid metabolism and coronary heart disease risk.
 - * Dr Paul Stillman, MB, ChB, DRCOG, PGCHE is in general practice in Crawley, Sussex. He is also a general practice trainer with the British Postgraduate Medical Federation.
 - * Dr Pamela Mason, PhD, MSc, MRPharmS is a pharmacist and nutritionist. Pamela writes regularly for the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, Nutrition Society, British Dietetic Association, United Kingdom Clinical Pharmacy Association, International Pharmaceutical Federation and Royal Society of Medicine. Pamela is available for interview/further comment.
 - * Sian Porter, MSc (Econ), BSc (Hons) RD, is a consultant nutritionist and registered dietitian
 - * Dr Chris Steele MB, ChB is a general practitioner and is the regular 'doc' on ITV's 'This Morning' show.
 - * Dr Amanda Kirby, MBBS, MRCP, MFFP is a GP in Cardiff, with specific experience in community paediatrics.

A high resolution Fat Panel logo is available