



Newsletter

All the latest on fat related issues.

Welcome.

Most Brits don't understand fats - which are good and which are bad? Even journalists and healthcare professionals sometimes look for extra information and guidance from time to time. According to the latest research from The Fat Panel, nearly half the population (45 per cent) do not realise that saturated fat is bad for their health and one in seven fail to link coronary heart disease with saturated fat intake.

The Fat Panel is here to help clear up this confusion. The Fat Panel is an independent panel of experts who can answer all your questions about dietary fats. We have also produced a full-colour magazine for the public, full of articles and advice about dietary fat.



Pamela



Sian



Chris



Amanda



Anne



Bruce



Paul



Sarah

Contents

- [Fat News](#)
- [Featured profile](#)
- [Fat Feature](#)
- [Q&A](#)
- [Fat vote](#)
- [Top tips](#)

Fat News

Update on Trans Fats

Trans fatty acids (TFAs) in our diet come mainly from two sources. One is when liquid oils are hardened by a process called partial hydrogenation; the other source of trans fatty acids is meat products and dairy foods. TFAs raise LDL 'bad' cholesterol and reduce HDL 'good' cholesterol, increasing the risk of Coronary Heart Disease (CHD), so they are not good for health. There are no health benefits from eating trans-fatty acids and they can potentially be harmful to health. No more than 2% of the calories we eat each day should come from TFAs.

A few months ago, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) carried out a review of TFAs at the request of the Secretary of State for Health. The FSA review looked at the health impacts of current intakes of TFAs, voluntary activities by the UK food industry to reduce levels of artificial TFAs in food, and the legislative actions already taken in other countries (Denmark and New York).

They found a moderate effect of TFAs on CHD risk but insufficient evidence that they are associated with other diseases such as diabetes, obesity and cancer. With regard to average intakes of TFAs, of key importance was that average UK intakes are less than half the maximum intake recommended by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) at just one per cent of energy intake. The report congratulated the UK food industry for its success in reducing the trans fat content of the foods on our shelves.

The US and Denmark have both introduced legislation to reduce the trans fat content of food, but intakes are much higher in both countries than in the UK. In the UK, voluntary industry action has

considerably reduced trans fat levels in foods and thus significantly reduced UK dietary intakes. In particular, trans fat levels in vegetable oils used as ingredients in the UK are at a minimum. It was concluded that in contrast to the US and Denmark, trans fat legislation in the UK would be unlikely to deliver the same public health benefit.

Current FSA policy is, therefore, to promote voluntary industry action to reduce trans fats without increasing saturated fats while providing advice to consumers on how to reduce trans fat intake through labelling and information on the types of foods in which trans fats can be found. It was determined that the public health focus needs to be on reducing the nation's consumption of saturated fat as we are, on average, eating 20% more than recommended and cutting intakes to within guideline amounts would potentially save up to 3,500 lives.

FSA programme aims to cut saturated fat

The FSA intends to work with industry to encourage reduction in saturated fat and to ensure that reformulation of foods to reduce trans fats should not increase saturated fat levels. The aim is also to raise the profile of saturated fat amongst consumers and to step up the promotion of healthier options.

The UK Food Standards Agency (FSA) has announced a range of activities to help people across the UK reduce the amount of saturated fat they eat. Intakes of saturated fat in the UK are about 20 per cent higher than official government recommendations.

Eating a diet high in saturated fat and calories can contribute to the development of a range of serious diet-related diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and some cancers. The Cabinet Report published in January 2008 estimated that up to 3,500 deaths each year could be prevented by reducing average population intakes of saturated fat from the current 13.3 per cent to below 11 per cent (a 20% decrease) of food energy intake.

MBE for Fat Panel Member

Fat Panel member, Dr Chris Steele, was awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Years Honours List. Dr Steele was awarded this honour in recognition of his many years' service in the fields of general medical practice as well as in broadcasting.

Dr Steele said: "I am delighted and honoured to receive this award and I thank Her Majesty for recognising my contribution over the years. It has been my passion to help and inform as many people as possible about health matters, and my position on the ITV This Morning show has been an ideal platform for this."

Dr Chris was also voted Health Journalist of the Year for 2007.

The Fat Panel Expands

The Fat Panel has gained two new academic experts, Dr Bruce Griffin and Dr Anne M. Minihane, adding enormously to its credibility and expertise. Dr Griffin is a senior academic and research scientist in Nutritional Metabolism in the Faculty of Health & Medical Sciences at the University of Surrey' and has expert knowledge of diet, fats, how they are used within the body and heart disease. Dr Minihane is a Reader in Integrative Nutrition at the University of Reading and is particularly interested in how our genetic make-up determines an individual's response to changes in dietary fat intake. Dr Griffin and Dr Minihane join Dr Berry to make a total of three academic experts on The Fat Panel. The Fat Panel is now 8-strong with experts from a variety of fields.

Featured Profile



Sian Porter MSc(Econ) BSc(Hons) RD

Sian is a Registered Dietitian with a BSc(HONS) in Nutrition and a MSc in Health Economics. Sian has worked in the field of clinical nutrition and health promotion in both acute and public health medicine and in the pharmaceutical and food industry. Currently Sian is a Visiting Senior Research Fellow in the Faculty of Health and Social Care, London South Bank University where research has included Healthy Living Centres and a community based project to improve heart health. Sian is also a consultant and communications advisor to the food industry on health issues.

Sian has published and presented nutrition research and contributed to many publications ranging from 'Health Which' to 'The Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics' to 'The Sun'.

Sian has broadcast on a wide range of food and health issues and her TV and radio experience includes ITN, Channel4 and Five News, GMTV, BBC Breakfast, BBC Radio 2 Health week, 'The Food Chain (BBC1)' as well as regular slots as the nutrition expert on her local BBC radio station.

Her particular field of interest and expertise lies in encouraging people to take a holistic approach to health and disease prevention (particularly heart disease risk) by communicating nutritional science in a meaningful, practical and achievable way.

Being a member of the British Dietetic Association where Sian is a one of their PR Committee, a member of the Nutrition Society and various other professional and scientific associations enables her to keep up to date.

Fat Feature

Saturated fat

Saturated fat usually comes from animal sources and is solid at room temperature. For example, it is the white fat you can see on meat or in the bottom of the grill pan. The less saturated fat you eat the better. Having too much saturated fat can increase the amount of cholesterol in the blood, which increases the chance of developing coronary heart disease). Foods which are high in saturated fat are:

- Butter, lard and ghee (clarified butter)
- Meat products, meat pies, sausages
- Hard cheese (e.g. Red Leicester; Cheddar; Double Gloucester)
- Pastry
- Cakes and biscuits
- Cream, soured cream and crème fraîche
- Coconut oil, coconut cream or palm oil

How can you cut saturated fat intake?

If you want to cut down on saturated fat, you can simply reduce your intake of some of the foods that contain high levels, like fatty meat, hard cheese, butter and lard and things made from them.

You will also need to compare the labels of different food products and choose those with less saturated fat. Many food labels include figures for the fat content and some foods will also give figures for saturated fat, or 'saturates'.

Saturated fat - what is high and what is low?

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) guidelines say that:

- High is more than 5g saturates per 100g of food

- Low is 1.5g saturates or less per 100g

You should aim for more products that fall into the low category. And only eat products that fall into the high category sparingly. The total amount of saturated fat that you eat each day should not exceed 20 grams or 11 per cent of the calories you eat. Some food labels give really practical information, showing exactly how much saturated fat is in a portion, rather than per 100 grams. Current guidelines recommend a maximum daily intake of 70g (700kcal) of fat for women and 95g (875kcal) for men.

Q&A

Q: How much can I cut my saturated fat intake by making some small changes?

- If you swap a 200ml glass of full-fat milk for semi-skimmed milk, you will cut your saturated fat intake by 2.9g and save 40 calories.
- A portion of cod fried in batter has 2.9g of saturated fat and 445 calories, but an average portion of baked cod has just 0.4g of saturated fat and only 115 calories.
- A grilled chicken breast without the skin contains a third less saturated fat than one with skin.

Your Feedback



We value your feedback. Let us know what you think!

[Click here to post feedback on this topic](#)

Fat Vote

How much fat do you think we should be eating on average per day?

- [- 25% of daily calories](#)
- [- 35% of calories](#)
- [- 45% of calories](#)

Top tips for cutting saturated fat

- Grill, bake, poach or steam rather than frying and roasting.
- Use little or no extra fat when cooking. Use a non-stick pan. Measure oil with a tablespoon rather than pouring it straight from the bottle. Or, use a spray oil to cook
- Limit consumption of butter, lard and ghee as these are rich sources of saturated fat. Replace with small amounts of unsaturated fats such as rapeseed oil, olive oil, sunflower oil and corn oil or spreads made from these
- Choose lean cuts of meat and trim off any visible fat. Have chicken or turkey without the skin. Cut right back on processed meats such as spam, salami and corned beef and meat pies, sausage rolls and breaded meat or chicken. Fish tends to be low in saturated fat too - unless it's deep-fried or in a rich, creamy sauce of course!
- Add less meat to stews and casseroles and replace with vegetables, beans and pulses.
- Read labels on food products so you can choose those with less saturated fat - some labels show exactly how much saturated fat is in a portion
- Have pies with only one crust rather than two - either a lid or a base - because pastry is very high in fat.
- Using spreads instead of butter can substantially reduce the saturated fat you are eating because all spreads contain at least 25 per cent less saturated fat than butter with some offering up to 83 per cent less

- Choose lower fat versions of dairy produce such as skimmed, 1% or semi-skimmed milk, reduced fat yogurt, lower fat cheeses (eg, cottage cheese and fromage frais) or strong tasting cheese so you don't need to use so much.