

**Fat is essential to life and fulfills a wide range of functions in the body:**

- Supplies fuel for the body's cells
- Provides a protective layer around organs such as the liver and kidneys
- Insulates our bodies against heat loss

But fats are not all the same; the chemical structure determines the fat's physical form, nutritional quality and effects on the body.

<b>Saturated and/or trans fat</b> Solid at room temperature, and found primarily in animal foods	<b>Unsaturated fat and Omega-3</b> Liquid at room temperature. Split into monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats and are largely from plant-based sources
<b>Sources:</b> Processed meat (like sausages, burgers and salami) Pastry Fatty or fried take-away foods Packaged cakes and biscuits Butter Hard and full fat soft cheeses Full fat dairy products Cream Crème fraiche Chicken skin and visible fat on meats Coconut oil and coconut milk Palm oil	<b>Sources:</b> Olives Nuts Seeds Oils made from olives, nuts and seeds (like olive oil, canola, sunflower, safflower) Oily fish Lean meats and poultry, eggs Margarine spreads (both monounsaturated and polyunsaturated)
Known to raise cholesterol and increase the risk of cardiovascular disease. Dietary advice is to reduce saturated fat intake and replace with unsaturated fats.	These types of fats have been shown to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.  Omega-3 is beneficial for cardiovascular health as they are shown to reduce circulating fats and inflammation

### Coconut oil: definitely not a 'superfood'

Did you know that coconut oil...

- is around 90% saturated fat
- contains no vitamins or minerals
- offers no nutritional benefit
- when consumed in excess, could contribute to an increased risk of coronary heart diseases
- can raise the less favourable LDL-cholesterol higher than other plant oils
- should be avoided.

## Expert advice

According to the Heart Foundation, too much unhealthy saturated and trans fat increases your risk of heart disease. People are encouraged to limit saturated fat, and avoid trans-fat.

Small amounts of trans fats naturally occur in dairy and meat products. The way some fats and oils are processed during manufacturing produces artificial or 'industrially produced' trans fats. They're in foods that use partially hydrogenated vegetable fats, like deep-fried foods and some baked foods like cakes and biscuits.

### Tips for eating less saturated and trans fats:

1. Choose reduced fat milk, cheese and yoghurt
2. On packaged food, check the ingredients list for 'hydrogenated oils' or 'partially hydrogenated vegetable oils' and avoid foods that contain these
3. If you have a sweet tooth, make your own cakes, biscuits or slices and ensure the recipe contains fruit and replace butter with margarine or canola oil, and cut out the icing
4. Limit takeaway food like hamburgers, pizza and hot chips. These foods should only be eaten sometimes and in small amounts (or make your own using core foods)
5. Eat fish instead of meat 2–3 times a week, and choose legume or bean-based meals twice a week.

<b>Butter vs Margarine in school canteens</b>	
<b>Off the menu</b>	<b>Substitution</b>
School canteens should not use butter in recipes, sandwiches or other canteen items as approximately 50% of the fat content in butter is saturated fat and 4% is trans fat.	Swap butter for a margarine spread made from canola, sunflower, olive or dairy blends.  Alternatively, try using avocado, hummus, reduced fat mayonnaise or tahini as a spread

### Sources:

- National Heart Foundation of Australia. (2008). *Q&A Omega-3: general*. Retrieved from: <http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/SiteCollectionDocuments/Fish-QA-General.pdf>
- National Heart Foundation of Australia. (2016). Replace unhealthy fats with healthy fats. Retrieved from: <https://heartfoundation.org.au/healthy-eating/food-and-nutrition/fats-and-cholesterol/replaceunhealthy-fats-with-healthy-fats>
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- Western Australian School Canteen Association Inc (2016) *Inside scoop on food*