

Macronutrient Imbalance

Face the Fats!

My grandma had a great idea on why fat is so prevalent in our diets. "It's cheap," she said. Additionally, fat is easy to prepare, tastes good, and is filling. The end result...Americans eat fat!

Within one decade, the average American went from a diet of 30% fat to a diet with over 50% fat intake. To make matters worse, most of the fat Americans eat is saturated...the artery clogging fat. It's no wonder that heart disease is so prevalent in our country.

Finally, eating so much fat comes at the expense of protein and carbohydrates. The result is an internal state of energy conservation. Meaning, your body is conserving energy, decreasing your metabolism, and leading to weight gain. It is the macronutrient imbalance of America.

Face the Fats: The Obesity Epidemic

Why is fat bad? Who said fat is bad? Because it's not. But it brings up a good point. Eat fat in moderation as part of a balanced diet and you have nothing to worry about. Eat fat in excess and then it becomes an issue. Heart disease, diabetes, and all the other diseases associated with obesity become your issues.

Let's start off with a few quick fat facts:

1. Fat is high energy food. In terms of calories, fat packs the most energy. The fat calorie has a high energy density value greater than other calories.
2. Recent studies have shown that high fat meals lead to hunger a few hours later. So we eat more fat.

Fat provokes a strong immediate fullness that just doesn't last. You're ready for late night fast food just a few hours after a high fat dinner.

3. Excess energy is stored as fat. Your body is relentless in protecting you from starvation. There is a great tendency to store fat. The body stores fat rather than use it for immediate energy needs. For immediate needs, the body uses simple carbohydrates or sugars.
4. Bad news. Cutting out fat from your diet might not effect the amount of fat stored. You are not going to starve! Your body's chemistry is primed to keep fat.

Eat Fat = Too Much Energy = Store Fat = Gain Weight

The macronutrient imbalance is eating too much fat. Fat is quickly stored by your body for future energy needs. The storage of fat results in weight gain or what we call... The Great American Macronutrient Imbalance

A correct intake of fat is around 30% of total intake. When comparing fat to protein and carbohydrates, the ideal percentage of intake for each is 40% protein, 30% carbs, and 30% fat.

Face the Fats -- Healthy Fats

Monounsaturated fat. Remains a liquid at room temperature but may start to solidify in the refrigerator. Foods high in monounsaturated fat include olive, peanut and canola oils. Avocados and most nuts also have high amounts of monounsaturated fat.

Polyunsaturated fat. Is usually a liquid at room temperature and in the refrigerator. Foods high in polyunsaturated fats include vegetable oils, such as safflower, corn, sunflower, soy and cottonseed oils.

Omega-3 fatty acids. These are polyunsaturated fats found mostly in seafood. Good sources of omega 3s include fatty, cold-water fish, such as salmon, mackerel and herring. Flaxseeds, flax oil and walnuts also contain omega-3 fatty acids, and small amounts are found in soybean and canola oils.

Face the Fats -- Harmful Fats

Saturated fat. Usually solid or waxy at room temperature, saturated fat is most often found in animal products - such as red meat, poultry, butter and whole milk. Other foods high in saturated fat include coconut, palm and other tropical oils.

Trans fat. Also referred to as trans-fatty acids, trans fat comes from adding hydrogen through a process called hydrogenation. This makes the fat more solid and less likely to turn rancid.

Hydrogenated fat is a common ingredient in commercial baked goods - such as crackers, cookies and cakes - and in fried foods such as doughnuts and french fries.

Shortenings and some margarines also are high in trans fat. Look for the words partially hydrogenated in the list of ingredients to see if the product has trans fat.

Some food labels state if the product has no trans-fatty acids. By January 1 of 2006, food manufacturers will have to list trans fat content on nutrition labels.

Dietary cholesterol. Your body naturally manufactures all of the cholesterol it needs, but you also get cholesterol from animal products, such as meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, dairy products,

lard and butter.

Face the Fats -- Adapted from the Mayo Clinic Online (<http://www.mayoclinic.com/facethefats/>)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recommend that fat make up no more than 35 percent of your daily calories. This means that if you consume 1,800 calories a day, consume no more than 70 grams of fat a day.

Keep in mind, however, that this is an upper limit and that most of these fat calories should come from monounsaturated and polyunsaturated sources. Type of fat Recommendation
Saturated fat Less than 10 percent of your total daily calories
Dietary cholesterol Less than 300 milligrams a day.

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