

Fats and Oils in Foods: How Much for Kids?

Is ice cream okay for kids? How about fried chicken nuggets, or fries? You are smart to wonder about higher-fat foods for kids. Here is the scoop.

Your child needs some fats and oils from food.

Fats and oils are part of a healthful diet, but the type of fat makes a difference to heart health, and the total amount of fat consumed is also important. Get your oils from fish, nuts, avocados, and liquid oils such as corn oil, soybean oil, olive oil, and canola oil.

Trying to cut way back on fats and oils may seem like a good idea. But your child needs some fats and oils to be healthy:

- For energy to play, learn, and grow
- To grow properly
- To use vitamins from food
- To add flavor to foods



Be flexible!

It is okay to eat foods with more fat sometimes. Enjoy a small bowl of ice cream or small order of fries occasionally. Then choose foods with less solid fat for the next meal or the next day.



Most food energy should come from whole-wheat bread, pasta, and rice, vegetables, fruits, low-fat and fat-free milk and milk products, cooked dry beans, lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, nuts or seeds. Be careful with nuts. They may cause choking in 2 to 3 year olds.

Eating less saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol is good family advice.

Do you have an infant or toddler under age 2?

If so, lowfat eating is not advised before age 2. Little ones need more fat for brain development. Once your child turns 2, learning a habit of eating lowfat foods, especially lowfat or fat-free milk, is healthful. If family meals and snacks have less fat, your child will learn to eat that way, too.

Choose to limit foods with solid fats. Eating a lot of solid fat increases the chance of heart disease later in your lives. Solid fats are solid at room temperature. Butter, stick margarine, and fat in meat are examples.

Eating lots of fats and oils can add up to too many calories. Weight gain over time may lead to type 2 diabetes and other chronic diseases at an early age. Choose mostly lean and lowfat foods to help your child and you keep your healthy weight.

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For Less Fat In Family Foods

You can plan and prepare family foods with less fat. Check (✓) one or two things to try this week. Add your own ideas.

- Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose foods, especially those with less *trans* and saturated fat.
- Use less fat and oils when you cook.

- Limit foods high in solid fat (bacon, sausage, other high-fat processed meats).

- Cut fat from meat, and take skin off chicken.



- Keep lowfat snacks in your kitchen: raw vegetables, fruit, pretzels, and bagels.



- Broil, roast, microwave, or stir-fry most of the time. Limit frying because it adds fat.

- Make whole-grain products, vegetables, and fruits part of family meals and snacks.

- Limit creamy sauces and salad dressings.



- Buy mostly lowfat or fat-free milk, yogurt, and cheese.



- Offer small amounts of higher fat foods, such as fries and cheese.

- Make cooked dry beans, fish, lean meats, and chicken the center of the meal.



- Serve mostly fruit for dessert.

- Use vegetable oils with no *trans* fat. Limit solid fats, such as butter, hard margarine, and lard.

- Get your oils from fish, nuts, avocados, and liquid oils such as corn oil, soybean oil, olive oil, and canola oil.

Your ideas: