



FAT IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF A HEALTHY DIET, helping you grow, giving you energy, and increasing your body's absorption of vitamins A, D, E and K.^{1,2} The oils you cook with can be great sources of healthy fats. However, many cooking oils also contain unhealthy fats, which can increase your risk for heart disease—one of the leading causes of death in Canada.^{1,2} Learn which oils are best for you and why, so that you can be confident that you're making the healthiest choice next time you head into the kitchen.

How fats in oils can affect your health

The foods that you eat have different types of fats, including saturated, unsaturated and trans fats. Eating the wrong kinds of fats can increase unhealthy LDL cholesterol and triglycerides and lower healthy HDL cholesterol. LDL cholesterol is labelled as “bad” because it increases your risk for heart disease when it builds up in your blood vessels and clogs them. Triglycerides, a type of fat, have also been linked

to heart disease. On the other hand, HDL cholesterol helps lower your risk for heart disease by removing excess bad cholesterol from your bloodstream.^{1,2}

In order to strike a healthy balance, you need to eat more of the right types of fats.^{1,2}

When you're cooking, choose oils higher in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats and lower in saturated and trans fats.^{1,2}



BAD FATS

Recommendation:

Limit or avoid^{2,3}

Saturated Fat^{1,2}

- Increases LDL cholesterol
- Sources: lard, butter, full-fat dairy products, bacon

Trans Fat^{1,2,4}

- Increases LDL cholesterol/decreases HDL cholesterol
- Created by heating vegetable oils under specific conditions; avoid “partially hydrogenated oils” on the ingredient list on food packages
- Sources: margarine, vegetable shortening, commercially-baked products, deep-fried foods



GOOD FATS

Recommendation:

2 to 3 tbsp (30 to 45 mL) a day¹

Monounsaturated Fat^{1,2}

- Improves blood cholesterol levels
- Sources: nuts/seeds, avocados, vegetable oils (olive, peanut)

Polyunsaturated Fat²

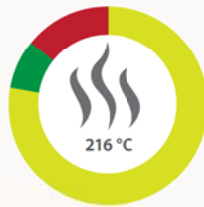
- Omega-3 helps lower triglycerides and possibly LDL
- Sources: nuts/seeds, cold-water fish, canola oil, soybean oil
- Omega-6 can be heart-healthy when it's eaten instead of saturated and trans fats, and is consumed in moderation
- Sources: safflower, sunflower, corn oils

BREAKING DOWN THE OPTIONS

The most common cooking oils, broken down by their smoke points and types of fat they contain.^{3,5}



LIGHT REFINED OLIVE OIL



LIGHT VIRGIN OLIVE OIL



CANOLA OIL



PEANUT OIL



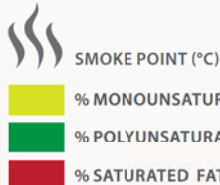
SOYBEAN OIL



PALM OIL



VIRGIN COCONUT* OIL



*Virgin coconut oil raises BOTH healthy and unhealthy cholesterol levels.³

The smoke point

Another important factor to consider when choosing cooking oils is the smoke point—the temperature at which the oil will begin to smoke. When an oil begins to smoke, it produces free radicals, which can be harmful to your health. In general, the more refined the oil, the higher the smoke point. Depending on what type of cooking or baking you're doing, some oils may be more appropriate than others:³

- Oils with **high** smoke points: use for searing and browning
- Oils with **medium-high** smoke points: use for oven cooking, stir frying and baking
- Oils with **medium** smoke points: use for low-heat baking, sauces and sautéing

For a more comprehensive list of oils, please visit health.clevelandclinic.org/heart-healthy-cooking-oils-101.

Oils are an integral part of cooking and baking, so it's important to know how they impact your health. Choosing oils high in healthy fats can help lower your risk for heart disease.¹⁻³

References

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