

# NUTRIGRAM

## January 2006



## The Skinny on Fat

Fat is often thought of as the dietary bad guy, but not all of the bad press is deserved. Fat is necessary. Dietary fat is a major energy source, is essential for growth and development, and provides essential fatty acids. In addition, fat helps our bodies absorb fat-soluble vitamins and other phytochemicals. The problem with fat comes when we eat too much of it. Fat has 9 calories per gram, which is a little more than double the amount in protein and carbohydrates. This means that a little fat provides a big caloric punch. Also, not all types of fat are equally good (or bad) for you. The key to fat is to eat some healthy fats, but not to go overboard with our portion sizes. Below are some facts about different types of fat and where they are found:

**Saturated Fat:** Saturated fat raises your LDL "bad" cholesterol level more than anything else you eat. It is found in greatest amounts in foods from animals, such as fatty cuts of meat, poultry with the skin, whole-milk dairy products, and in tropical oils like coconut, palm kernel and palm oils.

**Cholesterol:** Cholesterol in food raises LDL cholesterol in the blood. It is found in animal products only.

**Trans Fat:** Trans fat, like saturated fat and dietary cholesterol, raises LDL cholesterol. It is found in vegetable shortenings, some margarines, crackers, cookies, snack foods, and other foods made with or fried in partially hydrogenated oils. As of January 1st, Trans fat will be listed on the Nutrition Facts panel along with Saturated fat and Cholesterol.

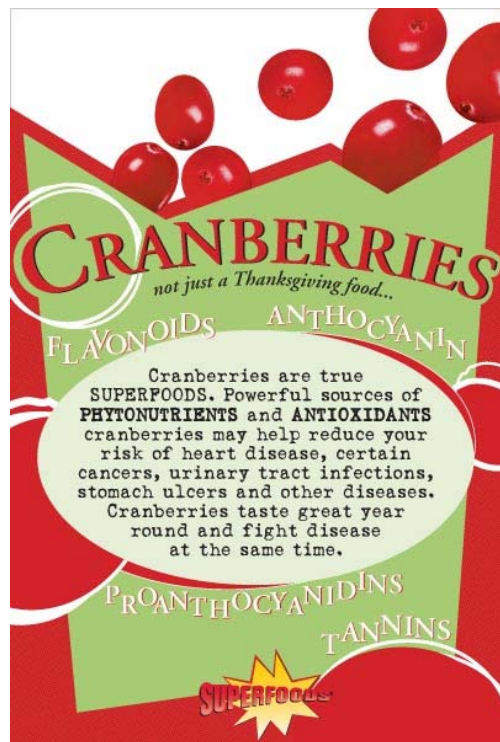
**Unsaturated Fat:** When used instead of saturated fat or trans fat, they may be able to lower LDL cholesterol. There are two types, mono- and polyunsaturated. They are found in vegetable oils, nuts and fish.

Tips to include more healthy fat in your diet:

- ▶ Cook with canola and olive oil. They are higher in monounsaturated fats than other oils.
- ▶ Snack on nuts and seeds.
- ▶ Eat fish a few times per week.
- ▶ Have guacamole and baked chips as a snack.
- ▶ Read food labels. Choose items that have unsaturated fat and as little saturated and trans fat as possible.

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