

The Skinny on Fat

By Melanie Peters | March 04, 2015

Until very recently, the rule of thumb for losing weight and limiting risk for heart disease and stroke was to eat a low-fat diet, specifically, a diet low in saturated fats and cholesterol. However, in early February a government panel seemed to reverse course on this decades-old adage by proposing new dietary guidelines focusing on eating less sugar but “easing” the restriction on [fat and cholesterol](#). Does this mean we now have carte blanche to eat bacon and eggs to our hearts content? Well, yes and no.



Our bodies need fat in order to function: we derive energy from fat; fat helps us maintain body temperature, insulating us from cold; it provides protection for our internal organs; and fat helps us absorb vital nutrients, such as vitamins A, D, E and K. There are two kinds of fat: the fat that our bodies make from taking in excess calories (stored fat) and dietary fat, which is found in some plants (like nuts and avocados) and animal proteins. The trick is eating the right kind of fat in the right proportion. So which fats and what proportion?

When looking for healthy fats, think unsaturated. More specifically, think polyunsaturated, monounsaturated, and omega-3s. According to the CDC, the majority of our fat consumption should be from these unsaturated sources, like nuts, vegetable oils, and fatty fish, and [only 20 to 35 percent](#) of your daily calorie intake should come from fat.

So what about bacon and eggs? The proposed guidelines suggest that while consuming eggs won't increase your risk of heart disease, we should limit our intake of [red and processed meats](#). That means bacon should remain an occasional indulgence, not a daily staple. On the other hand, you're free to enjoy the recipes below to your (healthy) heart's content.

Balsamic Vinaigrette (courtesy of [allrecipes.com](#)):

Eating salads is a great way to get your daily intake of vegetables but store bought salad dressings are often high in fat and sugar. This balsamic vinaigrette is made with olive oil, is quick and easy, and allows you to control the sugar content.



Broccoli and Walnut Salad:

Walnuts and olive oil are two excellent sources of unsaturated fats and pairing them with broccoli, which is high in vitamin K, will help you better absorb the nutrients in this delicious salad.

Smoked Salmon Pizza [↗](#)

(courtesy of [Health.com](#) [↗](#)):

Not only is salmon a great source of omega-3 fatty acids, a source

of unsaturated fat that some research suggest may [decrease inflammation](#), the lower-fat cream cheese keeps this indulgent dish low on guilt and high in flavor.

Broiled Trout with Almonds:

For a milder fish that still packs the omega-3 fatty acid punch of salmon, trout is a good go-to. This light dish is easy to put together for a quick supper, has two sources of unsaturated fat (trout and almonds) and is low in over-all fat.
