

Saturated fat: friend, not foe

Conventional medical authorities say that consumption of saturated animal fats is bad for you and causes heart disease. Well, I've got news for you...

It's time to get up to date and get real about this long-held myth that is ruining the health of Australians. Let's put the low fat propaganda to rest and learn how to eat real food again. Read on to find out the true science behind this story and discover the real cause of heart disease.



The demonization of saturated fat began in 1953, when Dr Ancel Keys published a paper comparing saturated fat intake and heart disease mortality. His theory that saturated fat consumption equated to heart disease

was essentially a concocted half-truth based on the findings he chose to write about.

However, the campaign against saturated fat has continued unabated ever since. Although his findings have been seriously questioned for a long time, it takes the media and government authorities a long time to wake up to the truth. It is difficult to simply come out and tell everyone the advice they've been giving for more than 50 years has actually been wrong and in fact the root cause of furthering morbidity and deaths in the western world. Can you imagine the public reaction? Nevertheless I will share with you some of this much needed information.

Keys based his theory on a study of six countries, in which higher saturated fat intake equated to higher rates of heart disease. However, he conveniently ignored data from 16 other countries that did not fit his theory. Had he included all 22 countries, the data would have shown that increasing the % of calories from fat actually *reduces* the number of deaths from coronary heart disease.

“Those who consume the highest percentage of saturated fat have the lowest risk of heart disease”

We now know that it's the trans fat found in margarine, vegetable shortening, and partially hydrogenated vegetable oils that is the true villain, causing far more significant health problems than saturated fat ever could.

Still, despite the scientific evidence, the low-fat dogma remains a favorite among most government health authorities. The US has recently just reissued their food pyramid to reduce saturated fat content even lower; preposterous when you consider there is no evidence to support such a move. Nevertheless, *YOU* are armed with the most up to date knowledge and can make more informed choices.

There are a number of indigenous tribes around the world which are living proof that a high-saturated fat diet equates to low mortality from heart disease. For example the Maasai tribe in Kenya/Tanzania eat a diet which contains Meat, milk and cattle blood for a total of 66 % saturated fat, numerous island cultures consume 30-60% coconut based diets, and the Inuit Eskimos in the Arctic consume whale meat and blubber getting 75 % saturated fat! These people don't die of heart disease at anywhere near the rate that Australians do.



Consider human breast milk, which contains 54 percent saturated fat. Since breast milk is the most perfect diet in existence for developing infants, the presence of high amounts of saturated fat cannot easily be construed as a "mistake."

As I have touched on in previous articles, when you replace saturated fat with a higher carbohydrate intake, particularly refined carbohydrate, you exacerbate insulin resistance and obesity, increase triglycerides and bad cholesterol, and reduce

beneficial cholesterol. Dietary efforts to improve your cardiovascular disease risk should primarily emphasize the *limitation of refined carbohydrate intake, and weight reduction*.

I believe that last point is very important, and is likely a major key for explaining the ever-increasing rate in obesity, heart disease and diabetes despite the reduction in saturated fat consumption.

Most people don't realise just how uncommon cardiovascular disease was 100 years ago. The dramatic increase in occurrence of heart disease indicates that something has changed that is contributing to this epidemic. We now know that consumption of meat and fat doesn't make you fat, carbohydrates do.

Fats can be generally divided into four types:

1. Saturated fats, from animal fat and tropical oils
2. Monounsaturated fat, such as olive oil
3. Polyunsaturated fat, such as omega-3 and omega-6 fats
4. Trans fats, such as margarine

Sources of *healthy fats* include:

Olives and olive oil
Coconuts and coconut oil
Butter
Raw Nuts, such as, almonds or pecans
Organic free-range egg yolks
Avocados
Grass fed meats
Unheated organic nut oils

The Omega 3 fat issue can be confusing, so let me give a brief summary. We need the proper balance between omega-3 and omega-6 fats in our bodies. The ideal ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 is around 1:4, but the typical Australian diet is closer to 1:20 in favor of omega-6. The overabundance of these oils in processed foods of all kinds explains our excess omega-6 levels.

In order to get this ratio into balance, you'll want to increase your omega-3 consumption while also decreasing your omega-6 intake. Start by reducing your intake of: Soy oil, Corn Oil, Canola oil, Safflower oil and Sunflower oil. We can obtain Omega 3 from both animal (fish and krill) and plant-based (flax and nuts) sources. Our body converts the plant based oil (ALA) into the animal based form of EPA and DHA, so your best bet is to go straight to the end product by choosing animal based sources. This is necessary because our body isn't particularly efficient at this conversion. The best source of animal based omega 3 is Krill Oil. Unlike fish oils, krill won't become rancid as easily, so you are guaranteed at

getting the highest dose of pure unspoiled oil. Krill oil also has within it an extremely powerful antioxidant known as Astaxanthin; but I'll share more on this in another article to come!

Remember you will want to avoid trans fats also. They are chemically formed in a factory and not naturally occurring. They are a completely unnatural fat that causes dysfunction at a cellular level, primarily because the cell doesn't recognise it as natural.

Saturated fats from animal and vegetable sources provide a number of important health benefits. In fact, your body *cannot function* without saturated fats. Saturated fats are needed for the proper function of your: Cell membranes, Heart, Bones (to assimilate calcium), Liver, Lungs, Hormones, Immune system, Satiety (reducing hunger) and Genetic regulation.

One of nature's best fats is coconut oil, namely because it is composed of about 50% of the fat lauric acid. This fat is converted by your body to monolaurin, which has anti-viral, anti-bacterial and anti-protozoa properties. Coconut oil is also about 2/3 medium chain fatty acids, and these fats are special indeed. These MCFAs are easier to digest than most fats, are used for immediate energy and increase metabolism contributing to weight loss.

Here is the most interesting thing about coconut oil, it has the ability to deliver quick energy to your body (like carbohydrates) however; coconut oil does not produce an insulin spike in your bloodstream. It acts on your body like a carbohydrate, without any of the harmful insulin-related effects associated with long-term high carbohydrate consumption.

So please remember, you do need a certain amount of healthy fat, while at the same time you'll want to avoid the unhealthy varieties. The easiest way to accomplish this is to simply eliminate processed foods, which are high in all things detrimental to your health: sugar, carbs, additives and dangerous types of fats.

These tips can help ensure you're eating the right fats for your health:

- Use butter instead of margarines and vegetable oil spreads. Butter is a healthy whole food that has received an unwarranted bad rap.
- Use coconut oil or butter for cooking. Coconut oil is far superior to any other cooking oil and is loaded with health benefits. (Remember that olive oil should be used *cold*, as a salad dressing for example, not to cook with as this will destroy its benefits)
- To round out your healthy fat intake, be sure to eat raw fats, such as those from avocados, raw dairy products, and olive oil, and also take a high-quality source of animal-based omega-3 fat, such as krill oil.

Dr David Pierotti