

## February 16: Dietary Guidelines for fat in diet

For those 2 years and older, intake of saturated fat should be limited to less than 10% of calories per day. The remainder of fat calories consumed ideally comes from unsaturated fats, particularly polyunsaturated fats. Saturated fat is commonly found in higher amounts in high-fat meat, full-fat dairy products (e.g., whole milk, ice cream, cheese), butter, coconut oil, and palm kernel and palm oil.

Below are excerpts from the *Dietary Guidelines for American, 2020-2025* issue: “About 70 to 75 percent of adults exceed the 10-percent limit on saturated fat as a result of selecting foods and beverages across food groups that are not in nutrient dense forms. The top sources of saturated fat for adults are sandwiches (e.g., deli sandwiches, burgers, tacos, burritos, grilled cheese, hot dogs) and other grain-based mixed dishes (e.g. spaghetti and meatballs, casseroles, quesadillas) that typically contain ingredients from several food groups that are not in nutrient-dense forms, including grains, protein foods, and dairy. Making changes to the type of ingredients as well as amount and/or frequency of their consumption will help adults lower saturated fat intake without a need to eliminate these foods from the household diet. “

“Strategies to lower saturated fat intake include reducing intakes of dessert and sweet snacks by consuming smaller portion sizes and eating these foods less often. Additional strategies include reading food labels to choose packaged foods lower in saturated fats and choosing lower fat forms of foods and beverages (e.g., fat-free or low-fat milk instead of 2 percent or whole milk; lean rather than fatty cuts of meat). When cooking and purchasing meals, select lean meat and lower fat cheese in place of high-fat meats and regular cheese—or replace them with ingredients with oils, such as nuts, seeds, or avocado. Cook and purchase products made with oils higher in polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fat (e.g., canola, corn, olive, peanut, safflower, soybean, and sunflower) rather than butter, shortening, or coconut or palm oils.”

To summarize, it’s not a matter of eliminating saturated fats completely from our diets but more about trying to incorporate unsaturated fats more often. Using them in place of saturated fats sometimes but not necessarily every time.