

Amount and types of fat we eat affect health and risk of disease

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Healthy adults should consume between 20 percent and 35 percent of their calories from dietary fat, increase their consumption of omega-3 fatty acids, and limit their intake of saturated and trans fats, according to an updated position paper from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

The position paper "Dietary Fatty Acids for Healthy Adults" has been published in the January issue of the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*. The position paper provides guidance for registered dietitian nutritionists and dietetic technicians, registered to translate research on fat and [fatty acids](#) into practical dietary recommendations for consumers.

It is the position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics that dietary fat for the healthy adult population should provide 20 percent to 35 percent of energy, with an increased consumption of n-3 [polyunsaturated fatty acids](#) and limited intake of saturated and [trans fats](#). The Academy recommends a food-based approach through a diet that includes regular consumption of fatty fish, nuts and seeds, lean meats and poultry, low-fat dairy products, vegetables, fruits, whole grains and legumes.

Registered dietitian nutritionists can help consumers understand that a total diet approach is more beneficial than simply reducing [dietary fat](#) and replacing it with carbohydrates, as a high intake of refined carbohydrate can also negatively affect [health](#).

The Academy's position paper can be translated into healthful eating messages for the public:

- A simple and effective way to improve health is to eat more fish, nuts and seeds and to consume fewer desserts and convenience foods.
- Fat is a critical nutrient, and certain types of

fat, such as omega-3s and omega-6s, are needed for good health. For this and other health reasons, a fat-free diet is not recommended.

- Fish is an excellent source of the omega-3s EPA and DHA; flax, walnuts and canola oil are good sources of ALA omega-3.
- Both the amount of fat (how much) and the type of fat (what foods) in the diet can affect health and risk of disease.
- Different foods provide different types of fat. Some fats improve your health (omega-3s help your heart and brain) while some are detrimental to your health (trans fat increases heart disease risk factors).

More information: "Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: Dietary Fatty Acids for Healthy Adults." Gretchen Vannice, Heather Rasmussen *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* - January 2014 (Vol. 114, Issue 1, Pages 136-153, [DOI: 10.1016/j.jand.2013.11.001](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jand.2013.11.001))

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