



Grains of truth about LOW-FAT SPREADS

Definitions

According to health professionals, the average American diet contains too much fat and too few carbohydrates. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and Health and Human Services Dietary Guidelines for Americans suggest that no more than 35 percent of calories should be obtained from fat. Nutritionists also recommend that Americans get 45 to 65 percent of their daily caloric intake from carbohydrates; only 50 percent are actually being consumed. The key: consume more grain-based foods and lighten up on spreads and toppings.



Calculating fat

Many people are confused when it comes to calculating grams of fat needed according to their required caloric intake. To determine how many grams of fat to consume daily:

- Multiply the number of calories usually eaten daily by 0.3 for 30 percent of the total, 0.25 for 25 percent and 0.2 for 20 percent, etc.

- Divide that number by 9 (the amount of calories in one gram of fat). For instance, 1,800 calories a day multiplied by 0.25 equals 450 calories. Divide 450 by 9 and the daily fat allowance is 50 grams.

To determine what percentage of calories are from fat:

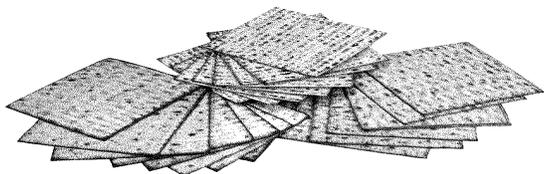
- Multiply the number of grams of fat in a food by 9 (the number of calories in one gram of fat).
- Divide that number by the total number of calories in the food.
- Multiply that number by 100 to get the percent. Balance high-fat choices with low-fat meals throughout the week.

When choosing which type of fats you will add to your recipes, keep in mind that mono- and poly-unsaturated fats are the preferred type. Olive, canola and peanut oils are primarily mono-unsaturated while sunflower, safflower and corn contain poly-unsaturated oils. Coconut and palm kernel oils and animal fats are more highly saturated and tend to raise blood cholesterol levels. Also, watch for any hydrogenated fats or oils. These will contain trans fats that also tend to raise blood cholesterol levels. While saturated and trans fats can be part of a healthy diet, they should be limited to less than 10 percent of the total calories.

Low-fat suggestions

- Use fat-free or low-fat cream cheese, salad dressing and mayonnaise. Watch for total trans fats, however.
- Select low-fat mozzarella and farmer's cheese instead of hard cheese.
- Enjoy jams and fruit purees, which are fat-free.
- Spread breads, bagels, English muffins and tortillas with low-fat cottage cheese or Parmesan and broil until bubbly.
- Try flavorful seasonings: dill, rosemary or Italian combinations.
- Experiment with salsa.
- Sprinkle on cinnamon and add a touch of apple sauce.
- Combine fat-free cream cheese and jam.

Consuming grain products is a great way to achieve a low-fat diet and satisfy hunger. In fact, complex carbohydrates such as those found in breads, bagels, tortillas, etc., are the best source of energy and contain less than half the calories found in fat.



Consider the tips for reducing fat on the wide variety of popular grain-based products:

Bagels	Hard rolls
Barbari	Hot dog buns
Boboli	Lavash
Bread sticks	Multi-grain & rye bread
Crackers	Pita bread
Dinner rolls	Raisin bread
English muffins	Tortillas
French bread	White bread
Hamburger buns	Whole-wheat bread

Enjoy these grain-based foods occasionally, because they are higher in fat:

Croissants	Biscuits
Muffins	Scones

Recipes

Fresh Veggie Spread

8 ounces	fat-free cream cheese, softened
1/3 cup	fat-free mayonnaise
1 tablespoon	chopped green onion
1/4 cup	minced red sweet pepper
1/3 cup	very finely chopped fresh broccoli
1/2 small	carrot, finely grated
1 tablespoon	minced dill or
1/2 teaspoon	dried dill

In a medium mixing bowl, beat the cream cheese until smooth. Beat in mayonnaise until thoroughly blended. Stir in onion, red pepper, broccoli, carrot and dill. Cover tightly and refrigerate at least one hour before serving. Makes about 1 1/2 cups.

Nutrient Analysis: One tablespoon provides approximately: 11 calories, 1 g protein, 1 g carbohydrates, 0 g fiber, 0 g fat, 1 mg cholesterol, 4 mcg folate, 0 mg iron, 17 mg calcium, 23 mg potassium, 71 mg sodium.

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Dried Beef Spread

8 ounces	fat-free cream cheese, softened
1 cup	low-fat sour cream
2 tablespoons	finely chopped green onions
1 tablespoon	finely chopped green peppers
2 1/2 ounces	dried beef, chopped

Pre-heat oven to 350°F.

Mix cream cheese and sour cream. Add remaining ingredients. Pour into a baking pan and bake for 15 minutes. Cool completely in refrigerator before serving. Makes 2 1/2 cups.

Nutrient Analysis: One tablespoon provides approximately: 16 calories, 2 g protein, 1 g carbohydrates, 0 g fiber, 1 g fat (0 g saturated), 3 mg cholesterol, 2 mcg folate, 0 mg iron, 19 mg calcium, 21 mg potassium, 98 mg sodium.

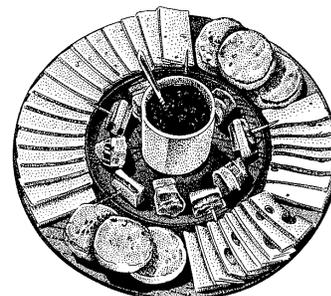
Apple or Pear Butter

4 medium	apples or pears
	(or a combination of the two)
1/2 teaspoon	cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon	nutmeg

Peel and core the apples or pears. Chop the fruit and put into a microwave bowl. Stir in the cinnamon and nutmeg. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and microwave the fruit on high for 12 minutes. Mash the fruit thoroughly with a potato masher and microwave it on high, uncovered, for 12 to 14 minutes more, until it is thick enough to spread on bread or toast. Serve the butter warm, at room temperature, or chilled. Makes about 2 cups.

Nutrient Analysis: One tablespoon provides approximately: 8 calories, 0 g protein, 2 g carbohydrates, 0 g fiber, 0 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 0 mcg folate, 0 mg iron, 0 mg sodium.

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