

# Fats and Oils: Build a Healthy Plate With Options Low in Solid Fats

Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children:  
Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program



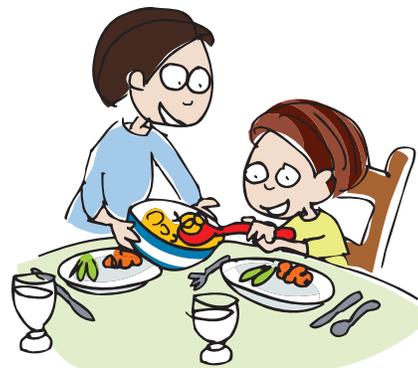
**Americans consume too many foods that are high in solid fats.** Children can fill up on the extra calories from solid fats and not get the nutrients they need to grow and be healthy. These extra calories from solid fats also make it harder for children to grow at a healthy weight. You can help by offering children fewer foods that are high in solid fats or replacing solid fats with healthy oils.



- **Solid Fats are high in saturated or *trans* fats**, which are found in butter (milk fat), beef fat, chicken fat, pork fat (lard, bacon), stick margarine, and shortening. They are also solid at room temperature. The fat in milk is considered solid fat, even though it is suspended in the milk. Saturated fat and *trans* fats increase blood cholesterol levels. Solid fats from animal sources contain cholesterol.
- **Oils are liquid at room temperature.** They are from many different plants and fish. Compared to solid fats, oils are a healthier option. Oils are a good source of healthy unsaturated fats and are generally cholesterol-free.

Oils:	
Canola oil	
Corn oil	
Cottonseed oil	
Olive oil	
Safflower oil	
Sunflower oil	
Some foods naturally high in oils:	
Nuts	Some fish
Olives	Avocados
Foods that are mainly oil include:	
Oil-based salad dressings	
Low-fat mayonnaise	
Soft (tub) margarine with no <i>trans</i> fats	

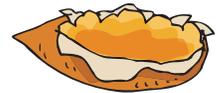
Solid Fats:
Beef, pork, and chicken fat
Butter, cream, and milk fat
Coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils
Hydrogenated oil
Partially hydrogenated oil
Shortening
Stick margarine



## What types of foods lower in solid fats should I offer?

The top sources of solid fats in the diets of children and adolescents 2 to 18 years old include pizza, whole milk, regular cheese, cookies, cakes, pies, and fatty meats. Whole and reduced-fat (2%) milk provide the majority of solid fats for younger children. Offer foods that have little or no solid fats. Here are some food substitutions to choose for **children 2 years and older**:

Instead of:	Choose:
Reduced-fat (2%) and whole milk	<b>Only fat-free and low-fat (1% or less) milk (both have the same amounts of calcium and other nutrients as whole and reduced-fat milk, without the extra fat)</b>
Regular, full-fat cheese and foods containing cheese (such as pizza)	<b>Part-skim mozzarella or other low-fat cheeses, and foods containing fat-free, low-fat, or reduced-fat cheeses</b>
Butter, stick margarine, or shortening for cooking	<b>Vegetable oils, such as canola, olive, safflower, or corn oil; or soft (tub) margarines with zero <i>trans</i> fats made from liquid vegetable oil</b>
Fried chicken or fried fish	<b>Grilled, baked, broiled, or roasted chicken or fish</b>
French fries or fried white potatoes	<b>Baked or boiled potatoes or sweet potatoes</b>
Tortilla chips or corn chips	<b>Baked chips or whole-grain crackers</b>
Breaded meat products (such as chicken nuggets or fish sticks) or other highly processed meat items (such as sausage, bacon, or hot dogs)	<b>Baked chicken breasts or codfish filets to make fajitas or tacos; baked frozen flounder or cod filets with lemon and herbs or tomato salsa</b>
Regular ground beef and cuts of meat with marbling or visible fat	<b>Lean cuts of meat (loin and round), chicken breast, fish, and ground turkey and beef (labeled “90% lean” or higher); beans and peas without added solid fat</b>
Doughnuts, pies, cookies, or cakes	<b>Fruits (fresh, frozen, or canned in water or 100% juice), or foods that are low in fat such as graham crackers, angel food cake, and plain animal crackers</b>
Ice cream, frozen yogurt, or full-fat yogurt	<b>Fat-free or low-fat plain yogurt, frozen fruits, or frozen 100% fruit bars</b>



## How can I prepare a variety of foods with fewer solid fats?

When it comes to heart health, the types and amounts of fat we eat make a big difference. Help protect children’s hearts by serving foods containing healthy oils rather than solid fats. You can tell if it’s a solid fat if it holds its shape at room temperature, like butter. Use these tips to prepare foods with little or no solid fats:

- ▶ **Lower the fat content in recipes** by using only fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese when cooking and baking.
- ▶ **Switch from solid fats to oils** when preparing food (see the chart on the first page of this tip sheet).
- ▶ **Limit serving foods that list “shortening” or “partially hydrogenated vegetable oil”** on the ingredient list.
- ▶ **Trim away all of the visible fat from meat and poultry** before cooking. Remove the skin from chicken and turkey to reduce the amount of solid fats. Drain off any fat that appears during cooking.
- ▶ **Add flavor to foods with lemon or herbs** instead of butter, stick margarine, gravy, or cream sauce.
- ▶ **Top pizza with vegetables** instead of pepperoni, sausage, or bacon.



### Be Mindful of the Foods You Choose for CACFP



- ▶ Offer **only fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk and yogurt** to children 2 years of age and older.



**CACFP Crediting Tip:**  
Only fat-free (skim) and low-fat (1%) milks are creditable for children 2 years and older.

- ▶ **Choose the leanest ground meats possible** (including beef, pork, chicken, and turkey), preferably meats labeled “90% lean” or higher. The higher the % number, the lower the amount of solid fats in the meat.
- ▶ **Offer processed foods like fried fish sticks, chicken nuggets, hotdogs, and fried white potatoes as occasional choices** (once weekly), not everyday choices.
- ▶ **Make fruit the choice for dessert.** Cakes, cookies, and pies are often made with solid fats. When making baked desserts, replace some of the butter with applesauce or yogurt.



- **Hot dogs, sausages, chips, string cheese, and large chunks of meat may pose choking hazards.**
- **See Supplement A on page 77 for more information on choking hazards.**



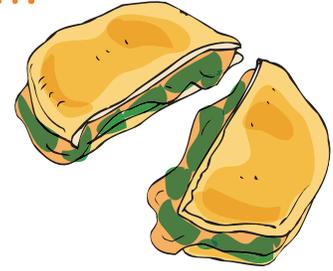
- **Some children in your care may be allergic to fish, seafood, soy, milk, wheat, eggs, nuts, and seeds. Actively supervise children when serving these foods. Handle food allergies on a case-by-case basis, have a medical statement on file, and contact your State agency or sponsoring organization if additional guidance is needed.**
- **See Supplement B on page 81 for more information on food allergies.**



## How can I encourage kids to eat foods with fewer solid fats?

Here are some ways to help kids eat fewer solid fats:

- ▶ **Make food fun.** Serve “Kangaroo Pockets” (stuff half a whole-grain pita pocket with sliced chicken, romaine lettuce, shredded carrots, and a little salad dressing). Try “Crunchy Baked Chicken” (oven-baked chicken tenders coated in crushed whole-grain cereal or breadcrumbs).



- ▶ **Cook together!** Children learn about foods when they help prepare them. Instead of baking pizza topped with regular cheese and fatty meats, have kids make their own mini pizzas by topping whole-grain English muffins or pitas with low-fat or part-skim cheeses and their favorite vegetables.



### Support the Message



- ▶ **Send the message home.** Share the *Nibbles for Health* take-home newsletter for parents on fats and oils in foods for children. [http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles/Nibbles\\_Newsletter\\_22.pdf](http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles/Nibbles_Newsletter_22.pdf)
- ▶ **Enjoy a variety of foods with little or no solid fats.** See *Choose MyPlate* for more ideas. <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers/daily-food-plans/about-empty-calories.html>

## Activities

### How can I put this information into practice?

- ▶ **Serve foods with little or no saturated fat and no *trans* fat.**
- ▶ **Use the Nutrition Facts label to compare saturated fat and trans fat in foods.** For *trans* fat, look for foods that have 0g of *trans* fat. For saturated fat, the label also provides the percent (%) Daily Value—choose foods with low numbers for saturated fat.

**The Nutrition Facts label** provides the % Daily Value for the nutrients listed (except *trans* fat, sugars, and protein).

**The % Daily Value** is a number that tells you if there is a lot or a little of a nutrient in a serving of the food. This number can also help you see how a serving of food fits into a total daily diet.



<b>Nutrition Facts</b>		
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)		
Amount Per Serving		
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110	
% Daily Value*		
Total Fat 12g	18%	
Saturated Fat 3g	15%	
Trans Fat 0g		
Cholesterol 30mg	10%	
Sodium 470mg	20%	
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%	
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%	
Sugars 6g		
Protein 5g		
Vitamin A 4%	•	Vitamin C 2%
Calcium 20%	•	Iron 4%

**A % Daily Value** of 5% or less is low; 20% or more is high. Choose foods that are low in saturated fat.

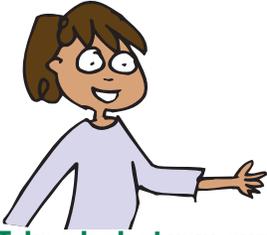
### Look at the Nutrition Facts label above to answer these questions.

- ▶ **What is the serving size for this food?** \_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ **What is the % Daily Value of saturated fat in this food?** \_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ **Does this food contribute a high or low amount of saturated fat?** \_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ **How many grams of *trans* fat are in this food?** \_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ **Does this food contribute a high or low amount of *trans* fat?** \_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ **How do you know if this food contributes high or low amounts of saturated fat and *trans* fat?** \_\_\_\_\_

*more 'activities' on next page ...*



... more 'activities'



**Take a look at your current weekly or cycle menu. Look at the Nutrition Facts labels for the menu items that include saturated fat and *trans* fat. Which options are higher and which are lower in solid fats?**

**Whenever possible, choose foods that contain 5% or less saturated fat.**

- ▶ **Circle items high in saturated fat and *trans* fat on the menu.** Use the *Fats and Oils Substitution Chart* and *Examples of Solid Fats and Oils Chart* from this tip sheet.
- ▶ **Look at the meat and meat alternate items on the menu. Circle the items that are high in solid fats** (for example: fried chicken, fish sticks, hotdogs, and regular, full-fat cheese).
- ▶ **Find menu items low in saturated fat and *trans* fat. What are some foods that can be served instead of the circled menu items next month?**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- ▶ **Write down two to three ways to lower the amount of saturated fat and *trans* fat in next month's menu.** Think about food choices that are lower in solid fats, what to look for when food shopping, or different ways to cook or prepare foods with fewer solid fats. (Refer to the tips on this tip sheet for easy ways to lower solid fats.)

**Example:** *Steam broccoli instead of cooking broccoli in butter.*

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