

Dietary Fat

Fats Found in Our Diet

The word fat refers to the glycerides in the body. Glycerides have a backbone of glycerol with fatty acids attached, usually 3, making a triglyceride. Fatty acids are long molecules of carbon and hydrogen atoms with an oxygen on the end.

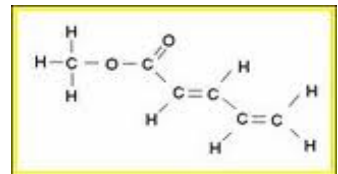
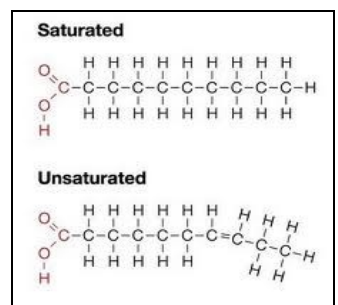
There are 4 types of fatty acids:

Saturated fatty acid's carbon atoms have all the hydrogen atoms that it can hold. These tend to be in a solid form, like butter. Bakery items will cook up thicker and fluffier with a saturated fat as opposed to oils.

Unsaturated fatty acids have available carbon atoms that can bond with hydrogen. They are usually liquid, like oils.

Mono-unsaturated fatty acids have only 1 carbon left for hydrogen bonding.

Polyunsaturated fatty acids have many carbons left for hydrogen bonding.



This trans fat molecule is bent because it was artificially saturated with hydrogen atoms.

Fat is a "Calorie Dense" Food

Fat = 9 calories per gram

Carbs = 4 calories per gram

Protein = 4 calories per gram

Alcohol = 4 calories per gram

Food manufacturers have learned that by adding hydrogen to unsaturated fats (oil) they can change their properties. Hydrogenated oil improves the texture but adds more SATURATED FAT.

Artificially hydrogenated fats are slightly different than their natural counterparts. Their molecules are twisted. Chemists call this the "trans configuration".

Trans fats confuse our biochemistry causing arteries to harden quicker and increase inflammation.

Trans Fats

Read the nutrition facts on the food label!

If the food item has less than half a gram of trans fat it can be called trans fat free.

This doesn't mean it is good for weight control.

Look at the ingredients listed. Even if the food label says "Trans fat.....0" it may still have trans fat. Read through the ingredients. If you see "Hydrogenised oil" listed in the ingredients, then the item does have trans fats. It just has less than half a gram. If you get half a gram from several processed food items a day, you may accidentally consume several grams a day.

