

Reducing the "F" Word

Did you know that the #1 killer here in the United States is heart disease- not cancer, diabetes or even automobile accidents, just plain clogging of the arteries. Lack of exercise and a diet of high in saturated fat foods is the reason Americans do not live longer. Most people take their health for granted until some life threatening event occurs and forces them to make a change. Reducing the fat in your diet can not only help you lose some of the excess pounds, but can also save your life. Of course, we are not saying to eliminate all the fat in your daily eating, but at least the saturated fats that come from animal sources. A moderate amount of good fat is needed for your body to function properly, have healthy hair and skin, and to give you energy for everyday activities.



FACTS ABOUT FAT

Some examples of good (monounsaturated/polyunsaturated) fats include olive oil, seeds and nuts, all natural peanut butter, avocados and flax seed oil. These are fats found mostly in plants. Your saturated fats, as mentioned earlier, comes from animal products such as butter, cheese, beef, pork and lard used to prepare fried foods. Fried foods, whether cooked in lard or vegetable oil are still not a healthy choice. Keep in mind that you add a large amount of extra calories to your day when you choose to eat fried food.

READING FOOD LABELS

Be aware of deceiving food labels on products marked low-fat, 98% fat-free, reduced fat or low cholesterol. Manufacturers are misleading you into believing that these products are good for you. All you are doing is building a larger bank account for these companies because all fat-free or reduced fat products are at least one dollar higher than their regular products. The items to look for when reading a food label are fat, sugar, sodium and carbohydrates. Compare the serving size to see if you are really getting a reduced fat item. Some words to watch for in the ingredients column are hydrogenated, triglycerides and tropical oils.

Here are some tips to help you decrease your fat intake without eliminating the taste:

1. Use a non-stick cooking spray or olive oil to sauté foods.
2. Try egg whites instead of whole eggs in your recipes - 1 whole egg = 2 egg whites.
3. Try a fat replacement product or applesauce instead of oil in your desert recipes.
4. Use only non-fat dressings on salads or for preparing meals. (one good mixture is red wine vinegar, a tablespoon of olive oil and fat free parmesan cheese - mix to taste)
5. Use soft corn tortillas instead of packaged fried ones for tacos.
6. Use no-salt/ no-fat chicken broth for many of your chicken recipes.
7. Careful with nuts in recipes - sprinkle on top instead adding to entire recipe.
8. Use butter-substitutes instead of real butter on your baked potatoes, in sauces or on your toast.