

Dear *Walk Across Texas* Participant,

Included with this letter is the sixth topic of the Weight Management Series called “Low-Fat Eating.” The goal of this topic is to limit fat intake to no more than 30% of total calories each day.

To help you reach this goal, look for key points while reading “Low-Fat Eating.”

- Many reduced or low fat foods are high in calories.
- Fat carries the vitamins A, D, E, and K.
- Total fat intake should be limited to 30% of total daily calories — no more than 10% saturated fat and 20% unsaturated fat.
- “Fat Free” foods may still have some fat — read the label.
- Look for “hidden fat” in foods especially when eating out.
- There are 9 calories in every gram of fat.

Happy Walking!

Sincerely,

Weight Management Series — Health Break 6

Low-Fat Eating

Goal:

To limit fat intake to no more than 30% of total calories each day

Objective:

Participants will:

- Recognize products that are high in fat.
- Make wise food choices in the supermarket and in restaurants.
- Calculate the fat allowance (30%) of calories in grams.

Key Teaching Points:

- Many reduced or low fat foods are high in calories
- Fat carries the vitamins A, D, E, and K
- Total fat intake should be limited to 30% of total daily calories — no more than 10% saturated fat and 20% unsaturated fat
- “Fat Free” foods may still have some fat — read the label.
- Look for “hidden fat” in foods especially when eating out.
- There are 9 calories in every gram of fat.

Activities:

- Have food labels from packaged products. Pass the labels out. Help participants to determine the total amount of fat, saturated fat, and unsaturated fat in each product by reading the food labels.
- Use *How to Calculate Fat Grams*. Go over steps 1–4 for calculating fat grams for 2000 calories. Then give the participants time to calculate the fat grams for 2500 calories (you may want to do this as a group instead). Help participants when needed. Go over the process with participants when they have completed the exercise. **Help them calculate the fat grams for their calorie goal.**

Evaluation

- Yes No 1. Many reduced or low fat foods are high in calories.
- Yes No 2. The only function of fat is to add weight to your body.
- Yes No 3. Total fat intake should be limited to 30% of your total daily calories.
- Yes No 4. It is always easy to tell which foods are low fat.
- Yes No 5. There are 4 calories in every gram of fat.

Answers: 1. Yes; 2. No; 3. Yes; 4. No; 5. No

Low-Fat Eating

When deciding what foods you will eat from the Food Guide Pyramid, keep in mind the amount of fat each food contains per serving. Try choosing reduced-fat foods as well as low calorie foods. It is important to have some fat in your daily calorie intake because fat carries the vitamins A, D, E, and K and aids in their absorption in the intestines.

Too much fat, however, can be harmful. By limiting the amount of fat you eat, you reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer, and overweight. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend limiting total fat intake to no more than 30% of calories. Only 10% or less of the total fat calories should come from saturated fat. For example, if you are eating 2000 calories of food each day, 20% or 400 calories should be from unsaturated fat and no more than 10% or 200 calories should be from saturated fat. Your total fat calorie intake would be 30% or 600 calories.

Saturated fat is usually in solid form like the marbling found in meats such as beef and pork or the fat on chicken. Products such as whole milk, cheese, and butter are also high in saturated fat. Nuts and products made from nuts have saturated fat. Examples include, peanuts, peanut butter, pecans, and walnuts, etc. Products in liquid form that are high in saturated fats include palm oil and coconut oil. Read your food label to determine the amount of saturated fat in processed and packaged products.

Does Fat Free Really Mean No Fat?

Some packaged foods make claims about fat. “Fat Free” or “Low Fat” does not mean that the food has no fat. It means that the food has less fat than the original food product. Read the label to know exactly how much fat is in the food.

Most labels have a guide at the bottom showing the Percent Daily Values based on a 2000 calorie diet. You should eat less than 65 grams which is about 30% of 2000 calories. Some of your fat may come from saturated fat. To meet your daily fat requirements when eating 2000 calories a day, you should eat less than 45 grams of unsaturated fat and 20 grams or less of saturated fat.

Foods that have less fat than the original product may still be high in calories. Often additional sugar is used to give added flavor to low-fat foods. Added sugar increases calorie content. It is important to look for the amount of calories for each serving when eating low-fat foods. You want to stay within your daily calories.

Hidden Fat

If you are eating out and want to eat less fat, choose foods which are broiled, grilled, baked, boiled, roasted, poached or steamed. Try fish, skinless poultry, lean red meats, salads, pasta with tomato sauce, fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain items, and frozen ices, sorbets, sherbets, and nonfat yogurt. Stay away from cream sauces and gravies as well as batter-dipped or fried foods.

If you feel you cannot live without a high fat dessert, order it and enjoy. You may want to eat part of it and take the rest home to be counted in tomorrow’s calories. Do not ever feel you cannot have a food. Stay as close to your total calorie intake per day as possible.

How to Calculate Fat Grams

Figuring your fat intake for any amount of calories is not hard because there are 9 calories in every gram of fat. Let's look at 1872 calories a day — the calories to maintain weight at 144 pounds. (Amounts on food labels may be rounded for labeling)

1. First find the total amount of fat calories allowed each day which is 30% of your total calories.

$$2000 \times .30 = 600 \text{ total calories from fat}$$

2. Now determine the amount of fat you can eat in grams.

$$600 \div 9 = 66.67 \text{ or } 66 \text{ total grams of fat (9 calories per gram)}$$

3. Next decide how much fat could be saturated fat.

$$66 \div 3 = 22 \text{ grams of saturated fat (about 10\% of total calories)}$$

4. Finally you can find how much should be unsaturated fat.

$$66 - 22 = 44 \text{ grams of unsaturated fat (about 20\% of total calories)}$$

Now you try determining the amount of fat you can have if you eat 2500 Calories a day.

1. $2500 \times .30 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$ total calories from fat.

2. $\underline{\hspace{2cm}} \div 9 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$ total grams of fat.

3. $\underline{\hspace{2cm}} \div 3 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$ grams of saturated fat.

4. $\underline{\hspace{2cm}} - \underline{\hspace{2cm}} = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$ grams of unsaturated fat.

Look at how you did:

1. $2500 \times .30 = 750$ total calories from fat

2. $750 \div 9 = 83$ total grams of fat

3. $83 \div 3 = 27$ grams of saturated fat

4. $83 - 27 = 56$ grams of unsaturated fat

Great Job! Now, using the 4 steps above, figure the amount of fat you can have based on your calorie goal.

Losing weight and maintaining a healthy weight is possible. Once you have lost the amount of weight you desire, you will need to continue to work at counting calories and fat for the rest of your life to maintain a healthy weight.

Just a Reminder

Benefits of a healthy weight: You will increase the length of your life. You will also reduce the risk of diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, osteoarthritis, and other illnesses associated with overweight.