



A lifestyle approach to improving mood and wellbeing

"LET THY FOOD BE THY MEDICINE AND THY MEDICINE BE THY FOOD."

HIPPOCRATES

The Skinny On Fried Foods ?



In recent years we've been hearing that fried foods are bad for our health and that they have been linked to chronic physical and emotional health problems. Yet many of us don't understand why this is. Increasingly, research is discovering more about the complex connection between fried foods and chronic diseases, like high cholesterol, cardiovascular disease, and anxiety. Read on for more information about fried foods and how they should be consumed if they are a part of your diet.

Fried Foods and Chronic Disease.



As many as 1 in 3 Americans eats fast food at least once a day, and most of those fast food meals include fried foods. Fried foods have long been linked to health problems, but research now shows eating fried food daily could lead to an early death, in some cases increasing the risk of death by 13%. Heart problems, obesity, type 2 diabetes and even mental health problems like depression, anxiety and cognitive decline have been linked to diets rich in highly processed and fried foods. But why, exactly, frying foods is bad for us, is not a simple matter.

All frying is not the same, and there are several things to consider, including the type of oil used, the time and temperature of the cooking process and the food item itself that is being fried. Frying foods at home, where you may have more control over these factors, may be a better option. If cooking with oil, try pan frying, or even sautéing instead of deep frying. Be sure to use oils that can safely withstand the high temperatures necessary for frying (between 350—400 degrees Fahrenheit), like peanut or sunflower oils.

Oils: What to Eat and What to Avoid

Some types of oils which are commonly used to fry foods contain "bad fats" (saturated and trans) which are known to contribute to poor health outcomes. But there are healthier choices when cooking with oil - whether or not you are frying with them! Some oils contain healthy fats, (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated) —which our bodies and brains need to function properly.

When shopping for healthy oils, choose those with less than 4 grams of saturated fat per tablespoon, and avoid partially hydrogenated oils or trans fats. Refer to the lists below for more guidance.

Healthier Fats and Oils

Choosing fats and oils with less saturated fat leads to a healthier heart. Eating less saturated fat can help prevent heart disease.



Choose **MORE often**

Foods lower in saturated fat

- Canola oil
- Safflower oil
- Sunflower oil
- Corn oil
- Olive oil
- Sesame oil
- Peanut oil
- Soft tub margarine (Light is a better choice)



Choose **LESS often**

Foods higher in saturated fat

- Coconut oil
- Butter
- Beef fat
- Palm oil
- Pork fat (lard)
- Chicken fat
- Solid shortening
- Cottonseed oil
- Fatback
- Bacon grease

For more heart-healthy cooking tips and recipes, visit [healthyeating.nhlbi.nih.gov](https://www.hearttruth.gov/healthy-eating).



[hearttruth.gov](https://www.hearttruth.gov)

Sources for this month's newsletter: have been taken from <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/fats/healthy-cooking-oils>; <https://blogs.bcm.edu/2023/04/25/the-truth-about-fried-food/>; <https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/mayo-clinic-minute-why-eating-too-many-fried-foods-could-lead-to-early-death/>; <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/resources/healthier-fats-and-oils-fact-sheet>

The Food and Thought Program works to promote awareness and provide short term counselling around the important link between nutrition and emotional health. For more information or for a referral to the program, please contact the Food and Thought Program

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