

# RECIPES FOR GOOD HEALTH

When selecting recipes for your family, yourself, and especially for your 4-H Foods and Nutrition Project activities use this guide to help you make smart decisions! Texas 4-H Youth Development is dedicated to improving the health of our youth through project and competitive experiences! Select new, healthier recipes or modify a family favorite!

## Reduce Sugar

- Reduce sugar by one-third. For example, if a recipe says to use 1 cup of sugar, use  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup.
- To enhance the flavor when sugar is reduced, add vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg or other flavorings.

## Reduce Fat

- Reduce fat by one-third. For example, if a recipe calls for  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of oil, use  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup.
- This method works best in gravies, sauces, puddings, and some cookies.

## Sneaky Fixes

Many modifications may go unnoticed! Try these easy and sneaky fixes to improve the health of your recipes, yourself, and your family!

## Omit or Reduce Salt

- Omit salt or reduce by one-half. For example, if a recipe calls for  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt, use  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon.
- Gradually reduce the amount of salt each time.
- Herbs, spices, or salt-free seasoning mixes can also be used as flavor enhancers. Do not eliminate salt from yeast bread or rolls; it is essential for flavor and helps the texture.

## Substitute Whole Grains

- Substitute whole grain flour. Whole wheat flour can replace from one-fourth to one-half of the all-purpose flour.
- For example, if a recipe has 3 cups all-purpose flour, use  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups whole wheat flour and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups all-purpose flour.





## Unsaturated Fat

Unsaturated fat (poly and mono) helps lower bad cholesterol and triglyceride levels. Unsaturated fats provide the essential fat that the body needs to properly function but can't produce itself. Common sources include:

- olive, peanut, canola, sunflower, and corn oils
- avocados
- nuts and seeds such as almonds, hazelnuts, pecans, walnuts, flax seeds, pumpkin seeds, and sesame seeds
- fish

## Saturated Fat

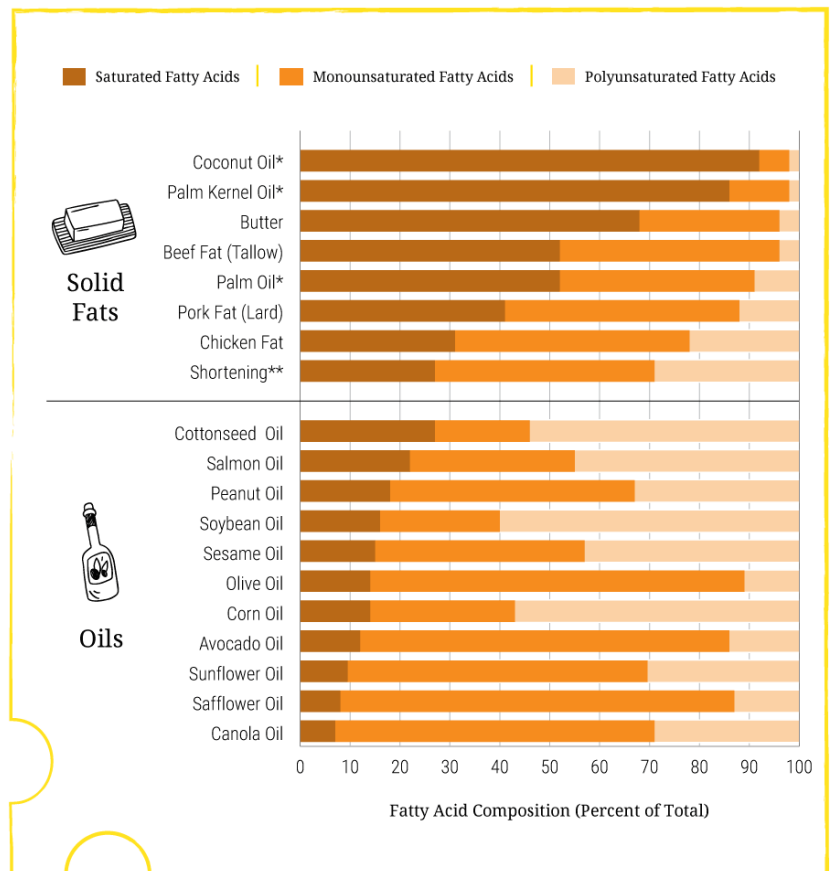
Saturated fat needs to be limited because it can increase the risk of heart disease and raise bad cholesterol levels. Sources:

- Coconut, coconut oil, palm oil, and palm kernel oil
- Whole milk products, butter
- High fat meat products such as bacon or sausage

## Fatty Acids of Common Fats & Oils

Use this chart to help guide you in selecting healthier fat and oil options in recipes.

- Select fats and oils for recipes that are highest in mono- or poly-unsaturated fats.
- Avoid fats and oils high in saturated fat.



**Source:** Dietary Guidelines 2015-2020. Retrieved from [https://health.gov/our-work/food-nutrition/2015-2020-dietary-guidelines/guidelines/chapter-1/a-closer-look-inside-healthy-eating-patterns/?mbid=synd\\_msnhealth#figure-1-2](https://health.gov/our-work/food-nutrition/2015-2020-dietary-guidelines/guidelines/chapter-1/a-closer-look-inside-healthy-eating-patterns/?mbid=synd_msnhealth#figure-1-2)

## Reducing Fat in Recipes

Dietary fats can be found in both plant and animal foods. Not only do fats supply calories, they also help with the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K. Although dietary fat has a specific function in the body, you should be careful on the types of fats and oils you choose in your diet and recipes.

Dietary fats are comprised of a mixture of saturated, polyunsaturated, and monounsaturated fatty acids. Some of these fatty acids are more desirable than others. You can make a healthier choice by replacing saturated fats with poly- and mono-unsaturated fats in recipes when possible.

# HEART SMART SUBSTITUTIONS

Try making a few substitutions and changes in your recipes to reduce calories, fat, and cholesterol while not sacrificing taste!

INSTEAD OF	TRY	BEST CHOICE
Butter	60/40 margarine-butter blend	Margarine or reduced calorie margarine
Sour Cream	Lite sour cream	Fat-free sour cream
2 Whole Eggs	1 whole egg, plus 2 egg whites	4 egg whites
Whole Milk	2% milk	Skim milk
Cream	Evaporated milk	Evaporated skim milk
Cream Cheese	Light cream cheese	Yogurt cheese
Cottage Cheese	Low-fat cottage cheese	Non-fat ricotta or cottage cheese
Mayonnaise	Lite mayonnaise	Half cholesterol free mayonnaise and half non-fat yogurt
Salad Dressing	Reduced-fat dressing	Fat-free dressing
Chicken with Skin	Remove skin <i>after</i> cooking	Remove skin <i>before</i> cooking
Regular Ground Beef (80/20)	Lean ground beef	Extra lean ground beef

**REMEMBER:** Modifying recipes or substituting ingredients may change some characteristics of the dish such as texture or density. Let your family or audience guide the acceptability of your changes!

## Resources

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (2012, May). Altering recipes for good health. Retrieved from: [https://agriflifelife.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/healthy\\_food\\_Challenge\\_altering\\_recipes.pdf](https://agriflifelife.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/healthy_food_Challenge_altering_recipes.pdf)

American Heart Association (2018, June). Fats. Retrieved from: <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/fats>

American Heart Association (2016, June).  
10 easy ways to swap out salt and lower sodium while cooking. Retrieved from: <https://sodiumbreakup.heart.org/10-easy-ways-swap-salt-lower-sodium-cooking>



## Reducing Added Sugars in Recipes

Sugar is a necessary ingredient in many products because it provides sweetness and bulk; but, it also provides extra calories and few nutrients. Reducing added sugars in recipes can help lessen the calories and improve the healthfulness of the recipe.

- Reduce amount of sugar called for by one-third or even one-half.
- Substitute half of the sugar in baked goods with applesauce.
- Use low-sugar versions of ingredients such as low-sugar jams or jellies.
- Make your own sauces such as tomato sauce or apple sauce.
- To add flavor, use flavorings such as vanilla extract or other sweet or savory spices that compliment the other recipe ingredients.
- Select non-nutritive sweeteners (artificial sweeteners), such as: saccharin (Sweet'N'Low®), aspartame (Equal® or NutraSweet®), acesulfame-K (SweetOne®), sucralose (Splenda®) or neotame. Follow directions for use as these high intensity sweeteners may call for you to use less in the recipe. \*\*Saccharin, sucralose, or acesulfame-K can be used for cooking because they are not destroyed by heat. Aspartame is a protein-derivative and is destroyed by heat, losing its flavor.
- For baking, select a "baking blend" which allows for cup for cup substitution.

## Reducing Salt in Recipes

Too much salt has been linked to high blood pressure. It is recommended to eat no more than 2300 mg/day. Eating even less is better! To help reduce salt intake, consider making these adjustments in recipes:

- Reduce the amount of salt called for in a recipe. Better yet, eliminate salt all together!
- Use onions, garlic, herbs, spices, citrus juices, or vinegars in place of some or all the salt to add more flavor.
- Use low- or no-sodium versions of ingredients.
- Drain and rinse canned beans and vegetables before using.
- Use fresh or frozen products without salt in place of canned products when possible.
- Cook pasta, rice, and hot cereals without salt.
- Avoid using processed or cured meats and products in recipes.

**For more information or additional program resources, please contact your local County Extension Office:**