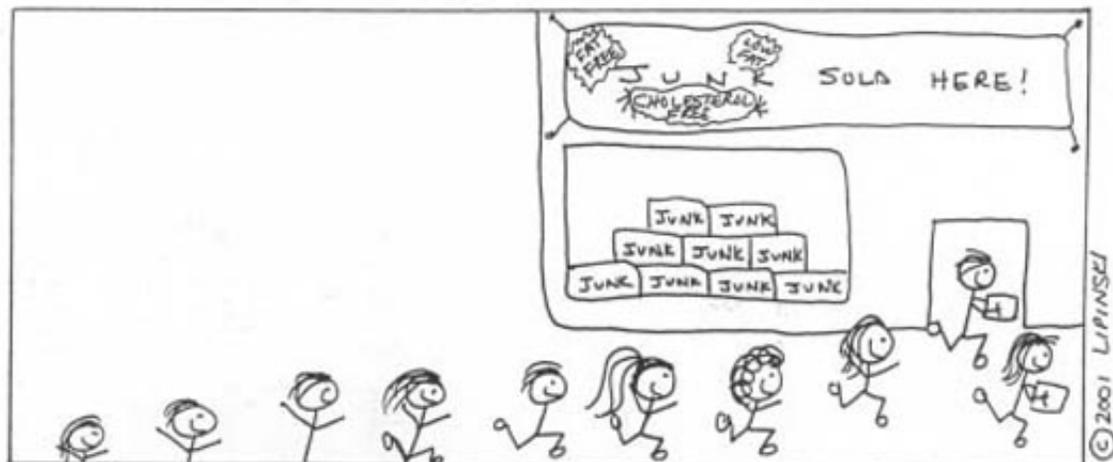
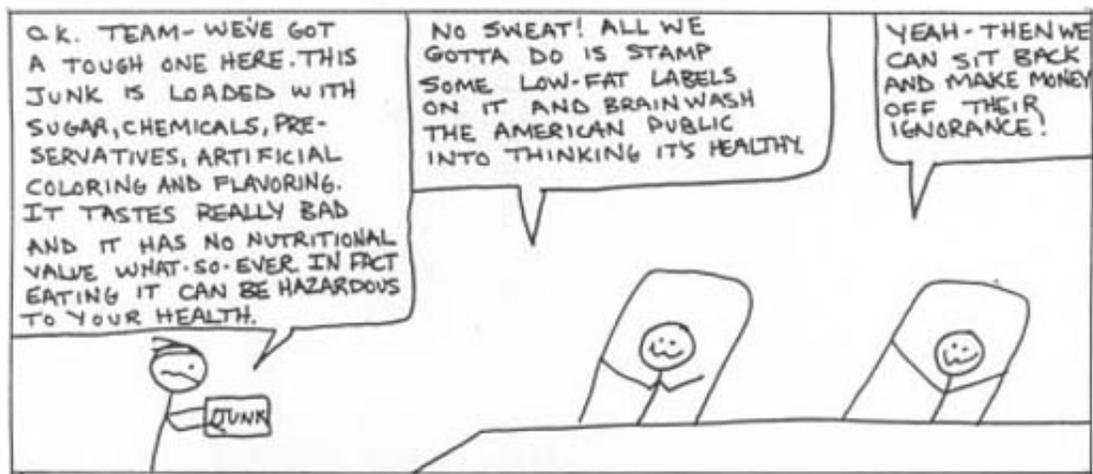


# Taking the Fear Out of Eating Fat

Lori Lipinski

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For many years we have been told over and over again that fat is unhealthy, and most people actually do believe it. Therefore, in an attempt to be “healthy,” many people avoid eating fat.

When I work with clients who claim they eat “healthy” I always ask them to explain what that means. The typical responses I hear are:

- “I never eat fatty red meats, only chicken or fish once or twice a week.”
- “I don’t use butter or eggs because I’m watching my cholesterol.”
- “My doctor told me to use margarine to avoid the heart disease that runs in my family.”
- “I’m trying to lose weight so I count fat grams, and buy everything fat-free.”

I have to give my clients some credit because they are simply doing what they have been told to do. The only problem is that what they have been told to do just doesn’t work. In fact, the clients I see who eat lowfat diets are usually the most unhealthy people that I work with. They typically suffer from symptoms of depression, fatigue, anxiety, mood swings, hypoglycemia, insulin resistance, constant and insatiable hunger, gall bladder problems (gas, bloating, “acid-reflux,” loose stools), hormonal imbalances, and even lack of menstruation in young women. Women on lowfat diets especially complain that their hair is dry and brittle and falls out easily and their skin is dry and wrinkly. And, as crazy as it sounds, they almost always want to lose weight!

Even though most people on lowfat diets don’t feel healthy, they still believe that somehow avoiding fat will make them healthier. The medical community, junk food industry and the media have done an incredible job convincing the American public that fats are bad for us. Fats have been blamed for everything from clogging our arteries to causing cancer. And fats are definitely the most popular scapegoat for our national health obsession—obesity!

But is fat really to blame?

## **Is Fat Fattening?**

Despite the fact that tasteless, fat-free foods are being shoved down the throats of the American public, our country keeps getting fatter and fatter. Yet the TV keeps trying to convince us that fat-free foods make us thin and healthy. So in the futile attempt to do the “right” thing, most people are cutting all the fat out of their diet and wondering why they aren’t losing weight. There are a few reasons for this.

## **Lowfat Diets Make You Hungry**

Have you ever tried a lowfat diet and felt like you were starving to death? Fat actually sends a signal to your brain to tell you when to stop eating. So, if you don’t get enough fat in a meal, you will never feel completely satisfied and will usually end up overeating. I’ve had clients admit to eating a whole box of fat-free cookies, and then say it was OK because the cookies were fat-free! This type of binge eating is very common for people on lowfat diets, and can essentially lead to more weight gain. Including good fats when you eat helps to control and regulate your appetite so you don’t have to eat as much to feel satisfied.

## **Low Fat=High Carb**

Another problem with lowfat diets is that lowfat means high-carb. And high-carb eventually leads to low blood sugar. When your blood sugar drops, your body goes into a storage mode and your metabolism slows down. Also, when you eat high-carb foods you trigger the release of insulin, which tells your body to store fat. Not to mention that your energy level drops with your blood sugar, so if you eat a high carb diet you will most likely lack the energy you need to exercise. Including good fats with every meal helps to keep your blood sugar stable. This maximizes your metabolism by providing your body with a steady supply of fuel to burn throughout

the day.

## Low Fat=Low Protein

People on lowfat diets typically avoid protein foods from animal sources because they contain saturated fats. This is not a very wise choice for most people because the only complete source of protein found in nature comes from animals. Not getting enough protein in your diet can lead to symptoms like weakness, fatigue, dry and brittle hair and nails, slow wound healing, chronic infections and sugar handling problems.

Another sign of protein deficiency is poor muscle tone. Often people on lowfat diets find it nearly impossible to lose weight or build muscle, no matter what they do. Even though they work out two hours a day four times per week, many dieters complain that they still fail to see the results of all their hard work when they look in the mirror. The reason for this is that they simply lack the protein they need to build strong muscles.

Also, the amino acids that we derive from protein are used to make neurotransmitters (brain chemicals) that actually help to control our appetite, reduce cravings and balance mood swings. The best way to overcome intense cravings for sweets and starches is to eat three balanced meals at regular intervals throughout the day. A balanced meal is protein-based and includes natural sources of carbohydrates and plenty of good fats!

So you've probably figured out by now that avoiding fat in your diet doesn't make it magically melt off your body. The truth is that eating fat does not make you fat. In fact, you don't even have to feel guilty when you eat fat because fat is essential to our health. The human brain is over 65 percent fat, our hormones are made from fat, and so is the outer layer of every single cell in the body. Fat keeps our skin healthy, enhances our immune system, stabilizes our blood sugar and prevents diabetes. Good fats benefit our heart, normalize our blood fats and cholesterol, and even prevent cancer! Here are a few steps to help you add good fats to your diet:

### 1. Avoid Reduced-Fat Products

Our media-induced fear of fat in this country has created a market for over 15,000 reduced-fat products! These products completely fail to live up to their claims, not to mention that they don't even taste good. Have you ever had a fat-free product that tasted better than the original? The fact is that when they remove the fat, they have to put something back in, and that "something" is usually more sugar, sodium, artificial flavorings, binding agents and other chemicals.

Don't be afraid to eat real food. The closer to nature, the better it is for you. Choose foods in their whole state. Do your best to avoid processed, prepackaged foods, especially those that are reduced-fat products.

### 2. Replace Margarine with Butter

We have been told to eat margarine because butter raises our cholesterol and is bad for our heart. The truth is that margarine eaters have twice the rate of heart disease as butter eaters (*Nutrition Week* 3/22/91 21:12).

We've also been told that saturated fats, the kind that are in butter, clog the arteries. But according to a study published in *The Lancet* (1994 344:1195), the fatty acids found in artery clogs are mostly unsaturated, not saturated, as we have been led to believe.

Butter is a natural fat, made from cream. Margarine is an artificial concoction of chemicals. Not only does butter taste better, but it's good for you. Butter is a source of fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K, and important trace minerals magnesium, zinc, chromium, selenium and iodine. Purchase organic butter produced without the use of hormones, steroids and antibiotics. Raw butter from pasture-fed cows is even better.

### 3. Replace Processed Vegetables Oils with Traditional Fats

For many years the media have told us to replace saturated fats with unsaturated fats, like those from vegetable oils. This advice does more harm than good. In the process of producing vegetable oils, toxic chemicals and high temperatures are used to extract the oil from the seed or bean. In this process virtually all of the nutritional value has been destroyed, not to mention that the high temperatures turn the oil rancid before you even bring it home.

Even worse, most of the vegetable oils that end up in packaged foods have been partially hydrogenated, a process that rearranges the fatty acid molecules, turning them from the natural cis configuration into trans fats, most of which do not exist in nature. Not only are trans fats difficult to digest, they have been implicated as a cause of both cancer and heart disease.

According to Dr. John Lee, MD, of California, “Trans fatty acids enter our metabolic processes but are defective for our bodily uses. Our cell membranes, our hormone synthesis, our immune system, our ability to deal with inflammation and to heal, and many, many, other vital systems all become defective when trans fatty acids substitute for the health-giving cis fatty acids. Unknowingly we are poisoning ourselves.”

The best fats for us to eat are those that generations thrived on before Quaker and Nabisco became household names. These traditional fats include butter, lard, tallow, olive oil, coconut and palm oils—fats that you don't hear about too often on TV!

#### Butter

Butter is a rich source of fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K. The saturated fat in butter actually enhances our immune function, protects the liver from toxins, provides nourishment for the heart in times of stress, gives stiffness and integrity to our cell membranes, and aids in the proper utilization of omega-3 essential fatty acids. Butter will add extra nutrients and flavor to your vegetables, whole grain breads, and sautéed dishes.

#### Lard

Lard is a traditional fat, the mention of which causes us moderns to cringe. Yet lard is a healthy, natural fat. Lard is rendered fat from pork and is mostly monounsaturated. Lard can be a wonderful source of vitamin D. Traditionally, lard has been used and enjoyed for pastries and frying potatoes—until the vegetable oil industry took over. Don't be afraid to experiment with lard in your kitchen, it will add lots of flavor to your food.

On a side note, I worked with a client from Mexico who was here visiting her daughter over the summer. The mother was 85 years old, very strong and healthy, and had not one wrinkle on her beautiful face. Her skin was incredible! It was so soft and silky, not at all dry, scaly or wrinkly like the skin I'm so used to seeing with most of my clients. I just had to ask her what kind of fats she eats. Her daughter translated my question to her mother and then replied, “She said she eats mostly lard. I can't believe it! I keep telling her that's not good for her, but she just won't listen!” Us silly Americans!

#### Tallow

Tallow is used in traditional cultures for its health benefits. Tallow is rendered beef fat and is a very stable fat for frying.

#### Olive Oil

Olive oil has been used for thousands of years for its many health benefits. Olive oil is a rich source of antioxidants, relieves the pain and inflammation of arthritis, normalizes blood fats and cholesterol, stimulates strong gallbladder contractions and is known for increasing longevity. Olive oil can be used for sautéing at moderate temperatures and is a perfect base for salad dressings. However, it is important not to use olive oil as your only fat—you need the nutrients found exclusively in animal fats and too much monounsaturated fat without a balance of saturated fats can cause problems.

## Coconut and Palm Oils

These tropical oils are rich sources of saturated fat, especially lauric acid, which has strong antifungal and antimicrobial properties. They are extremely stable and can be used in baking, frying, sautéing and especially for making popcorn!

My favorite way to eat popcorn is the following: Melt 1 tablespoon coconut oil in large pot over high heat, add 1 cup organic popcorn and cover. Once popcorn starts to pop, shake pan over flame until all the kernels have popped. Melt 1 stick of organic butter in small pan, crush 2 cloves garlic into the butter, add ¼ cup naturally fermented soy sauce and 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper. Pour evenly over popcorn. Then sprinkle ½ cup of grated “stinky” cheese (asiago, romano, or parmesan) and Celtic sea salt (to taste) on popcorn. Serve with chunks of salami or sausage from the farm.

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## Sidebar

### Priming Your Gallbladder for Fats

Is your gallbladder ready for fat? If you're an American, chances are you've experienced problems with your gall bladder at one time or another. Typical gallbladder symptoms include: gas (especially burping after meals), a full or heavy feeling after meals, bloating, “acid reflux” (after meals and at night when lying down), pain in right side radiating into right shoulder blade, loose or light colored stools that float.

Two things that the gallbladder doesn't like are bad fats and no fats. Bad fats, like processed vegetable oils, are difficult to digest and put a lot of stress on the gallbladder. The gallbladder is a little sac that sits along side your liver. The liver produces bile, a substance made from cholesterol that emulsifies fat and makes it easier to digest. The gallbladder stores and concentrates bile, then secretes it into the small intestines when fats are present. If you don't eat fat, the gallbladder won't get any exercise and can begin to atrophy.

If you've eaten mostly bad fats in your life or have spent many years on a lowfat diet, chances are your gallbladder will need a little work before you will be able to completely digest generous amounts of good fats in your diet. Start by practicing good digestive habits (discussed in the Spring 2002 issue) and enhance your digestion with raw apple cider vinegar. Mix 1 teaspoon with 2-4 ounces water and drink with meals. A nice acid environment in the stomach stimulates the gallbladder to do its job. For additional support, I recommend Dr. Schulze's formula to cleanse the liver and gallbladder. It's called the L/GB-AP formula, call 800-HERBDOC to order.

Other helpful remedies include Swedish Bitters, 1 teaspoon in water taken just after meals, and lacto-fermented foods such as saurkraut and beet kvass.

Coconut oil is very easy on the gall bladder because the preponderance of short- and medium-chain fatty acids it contains do not require bile salts for digestion. If you are just beginning to add fats to your diet after many years of lowfat foods, your best choice in the start is coconut oil.

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