



Kids in Nutrition

Encouraging the younger generation to
lead healthier, more sustainable lives!

Weekly Newsletter
kidsinnutrition.org

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Week 4: Fats & Cooking Methods

[Fats](#) are necessary for growth and development as they provide us with energy, help protect our nerves, maintains cholesterol, and supports cell growth. However, consuming the right type of fat is important for our brain and our heart.

The type of fat found in heart healthy foods are primarily unsaturated fats, with some saturated fats. Unhealthy fatty foods are generally processed or deep fried and also contain saturated fat, as trans fats have been federally banned in America. Because saturated fats fall under both categories, looking at food as a whole instead of fixating on a single nutrient is more appropriate when determining the health benefit or risk of consuming foods with saturated fats. [Recommendations](#) to reduce saturated fat itself may compromise the intake of nutrient dense foods important for preventing disease and improving health. Despite their presence in highly processed foods, red and processed meat, and fried foods, saturated fats can be included in a healthy diet. Different [saturated fatty acids](#) (SFA) have varied effects on the body depending on the food source. However, eating too much processed and fried food containing saturated fat can lead to [obesity](#) and [cardiovascular disease](#) (CVD). To fulfill your dietary fat intake, choose more foods with unsaturated fats!



KIN's Healthy Heart Tree

Lesson Objectives:

- Explain why fats are important for the body.
- Describe which foods have what fats and how to make healthier choices.
- Distinguish between healthy and unhealthy cooking methods.

Cooking Methods



Choosing what kind of food to include in your diet is just one aspect of eating healthy; how you prepare your food also impacts its nutritional content. Healthier cooking methods like pan frying, steaming, boiling, baking, and grilling use little to no oil. Some foods require no cooking at all and can be eaten raw!



Although deep fried foods may be tasty, deep frying [absorbs](#) the oil and is high in saturated fat. Try to eat deep fried foods in moderation!



Weekly Challenge!

Eat whole foods with healthy fats like nuts, avocados, and seeds every day for a week!

Saturated and Unsaturated Fat

Over-consuming processed and fried foods with saturated fat raises your bad cholesterol, also known as low-density lipoprotein (small dense LDL). This can lead to the formation of cholesterol deposits called plaque in your arteries (Figure A). This buildup restricts blood flow so organs like your brain and heart cannot receive the oxygen they need to function, leading to an increased risk of heart attacks and strokes. When compared to processed and fried foods, the dietary saturated fat found in whole foods do not raise the same [small dense LDL](#) that is associated with heart-disease risk. That is why it is important to consider foods for all its healthful components.



Figure A

On the contrary, foods with unsaturated fats include nuts, avocados, seeds, olive and avocado oils, and fatty fish with essential omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids. These contain good cholesterol called high-density lipoprotein (HDL). HDLs help remove plaque and deliver LDLs to the liver to be disposed, reducing the risk of heart attacks and strokes. This allows for better blood flow, as shown in Figure B.



Figure B

Week 4 Recipe: *Homemade Hummus*

Prep Time: 5 minutes (wait time: 7 hours/overnight)

Yield: 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups

Ingredients:

- 4 garlic cloves
- 2 cups canned chickpeas, drained, liquid reserved
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{3}$ tahini
- 6 tablespoons lemon juice (2 lemons)
- 2 tablespoons water or liquid from the chickpeas
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cumin



Instructions:

1. Mince garlic in the food processor.
2. Add tahini and lemon juice to the food processor. Process for 1 minute.
3. Add cumin and salt to the processor. Process until well combined.
4. Add the chickpeas and process until thick and smooth.
5. If the hummus is too thick, add some tablespoons of water or liquid from the chickpeas to reach your desired consistency.
6. Modify this recipe to your liking! Add beets, roasted bell peppers, herbs, and spices ... the possibilities are endless!