

Fats: Why We Need Them in our Diet

Fats are an essential part of a healthy, well balanced diet. Some fats are better than others and we will cover that a bit later, but first, why do we need fat in our diet? Fat has many important roles in the body and if you were to cut out all fat from the diet, your body would soon start to suffer for it. A few of the important functions fat has in the body includes:

A source of energy – Our body uses the fat we eat, and fats we make from other nutrients in our bodies, to provide energy.

Essential fatty acids – Dietary fats that are essential for growth development and cell functions, but cannot be made by our body's processes. These are the fats we must get from our diet.

Proper functioning of nerves and brain- fats are part of myelin- a fatty material which wraps around our nerve cells so that they can send electrical messages. Our brains contain large amounts of essential fats.

Maintaining healthy skin and other tissues – All of our body cells need to contain some fats as essential parts of cell membranes, controlling what goes in and out of our cells.

Transporting fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K through the bloodstream to where they are needed.

Forming steroid hormones needed to regulate many bodily processes.



As you can see, fat is an essential element in the body and some of these fats must come from our diets. Now as I mentioned before, there are good fats and then there are bad fats.

Bad fats are the saturated and trans fats found in fatty meats, butter, cheese, cream and also highly processed foods such as cakes, biscuits, chips, croissants, etc. The good fats, which we want to consume on a regular basis, are the mono and poly unsaturated fats.

These types of fats can be found in avocados, nuts, seeds, fish, olive oil.

Eating healthy fats on a regular basis is essential for a healthy and well balanced body. The key to consuming these types of fats is moderation. If eaten in excess, they can lead to weight gain. But a healthy portion of unsaturated fats a day is important for health. Don't be afraid of, or exclude all fats, include these good fats on a regular basis with a variety of other healthy, nutritious foods.