

## KIDS KITCHEN: WHAT IS FAT?

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Fat is a necessary part of a healthy diet. It is found in some foods like nuts, oils, butter, and meats like beef. Fat is not a bad food. Instead of avoiding fat, you should try to include a little bit of fat at each meal. Dietary fat provides the most calories compared to protein foods and carbohydrate foods. You, as a kid, especially need a certain amount of fat in your diet so that your brain and nervous system develop correctly. Fat also helps protect your organs and helps your body absorb essential vitamins!

### ARE ALL FATS CREATED EQUAL?

No. There are two main types of fat, **saturated** and **unsaturated**.

#### LIMIT SATURATED FAT.

This type of fat is found mostly in animal products:

- red meat*  
(hamburger, hot dog, bacon, sausage, bologna)
- butter*
- chicken fingers or other fried chicken*
- ice cream*
- baked goods*  
(cookies, pastries, cake)
- high-fat dairy products*  
(full-fat cheese, ice cream, whole milk, 2% milk, sour cream)
- ranch dressing*
- chocolate or candy bars*
- french fries*
- cream sauces*
- gravy made with meat drippings*

Foods from the saturated fat group are not your best choice, but they are okay to eat every now and then.



#### EAT MORE UNSATURATED FAT.

This type of fat is found mostly in plant products and fish:

- avocado*
- olive oil and olives*
- canola oil*
- safflower oil*
- peanut butter and peanut oil*
- nuts*  
(almonds, cashews, pecans, walnuts, peanuts)
- pumpkin or sunflower seeds*
- baked fish*  
(tuna, salmon, trout, mackerel)
- soft tub margarine*
- homemade salad dressing*  
(olive oil and vinegar)
- sesame seeds*
- mayonnaise*
- tofu and other soybean products*

Unsaturated fat is considered a healthy fat and you should eat it more often than saturated fat.

[www.ext.vt.edu](http://www.ext.vt.edu)

# DO I EAT HEALTHY FATS?

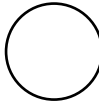
Write down what you ate at breakfast, lunch, and dinner and for snacks. For each meal, did you eat more unsaturated or saturated fats? Color in the space provided either green (unsaturated fats) or red (saturated fats).

**GREEN FOODS = UNSATURATED FATS**

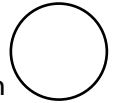
**RED FOODS = SATURATED FATS**

When you are finished, add up all of your red spaces and your green spaces. At the bottom of the page, color in your traffic light with whatever color you had more of.

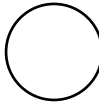
**BREAKFAST**

Red  
or  
Green 

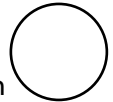
**LUNCH**

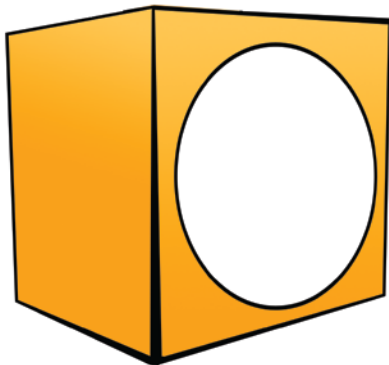
Red  
or  
Green 

**DINNER**

Red  
or  
Green 

**SNACKS**

Red  
or  
Green 



**IF YOUR TRAFFIC LIGHT IS RED, THEN FIND WHERE YOU COULD MAKE HEALTHIER CHOICES DURING THE DAY TO CHANGE THE COLOR. IF YOUR TRAFFIC LIGHT IS GREEN, THEN YOU HAVE CHOSEN HEALTHY FATS AND ARE READY TO GO!!**

Source: *Kids Health for Kids: Learning about Fat*, [www.kidshealth.org/kid/nutrition/food/fat.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/nutrition/food/fat.html)

Reviewed by *Kathy Hosig, Ph.D.*, associate professor, *Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise*.

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