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## Healthy Back to School Tips

Summer is winding down and the kids are heading back to school. Now is the time to be prepared. Things will look a bit different this year and health will be one of the main priorities. Here are a few tips to help the whole family stay healthy.

- **Pre-plan healthy meals**
  - It is important and we are all eating healthy, immune boosting foods, and planning ahead will make it much easier.
- Get plenty of movement
  - Physical activity can reduce anxiety and even help children focus in school. Just a quick walk around the block added to your day is beneficial.
- Get plenty of sleep
  - Insufficient sleep is linked to several health problems including depression and lack of focus. Set a reasonable household bedtime and stick to it.
- Time management
  - We are all busy and the thought of school, work, meal prep, exercise and getting to bed at a decent time can be overwhelming. Planning ahead and making a schedule can give you a better view of what you can fit in your week.



## What Does Eating Fried, Greasy Foods Do to the Body?

It is important to know how your nutrition choices, and those greasy foods in particular, affect your health.

### It raises your risk for heart disease and diabetes

If your diet consistently includes greasy foods, you'll likely see your risk for chronic conditions—particularly heart disease—go up. A 2014 study from researchers at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health found that people who ate fried foods between four and six times per week saw their risk for Type 2 diabetes climb 39%, and their risk for coronary heart disease increase by 23%. For people who ate it every day, those percentages only got higher.

### May lead to weight gain and obesity

Fried foods contain more calories than their non-fried counterparts, so eating a lot of them can significantly increase your calorie intake. Studies indicate that the trans fats in fried foods may play a significant role in weight gain and obesity. Obesity is associated with many negative health conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, and stroke.

### It strains your digestive system

When we eat greasy foods like fried food, the sheer volume of fat puts a lot of pressure on our digestive system. Of fat, carbs and protein, fat is the most slowly digested, and it requires enzymes and digestive juices, like bile and stomach acid, to break it down. Everything from stress to medication can lower levels of these digestive juices, so many people are deficient to begin with. Add in fat, and your digestive system will be working overtime, often leading to bloating, nausea and discomfort.

### It makes you run to the bathroom

The most common symptom of digestive strain is an unpleasant one. Not only will food just sit in your stomach, but it may enter the intestines inadequately digested. Sometimes you wind up seeing greasy or oily stools in these cases. Many people also experience diarrhea and stomach pain after eating greasy food.

### It throws your gut bacteria out of whack

More and more evidence suggests that what you eat affects your gut bacteria, also known as your microbiome. Downing a cheeseburger and fries, isn't doing those microorganisms any favors. Greasy foods do not contain the nourishing, healthy fats that we find in things like avocados, fish and extra virgin olive oil. Eating more refined vegetable oils than nourishing fats, tips the body's balance of fatty acids, which in turn may throw off everything from hormone levels to immune health.

Sources: [TIME.com](https://www.time.com), [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com)



## Good Fat vs. Bad Fat

It is important to understand which type of fat we can eat in moderation and which type we need to avoid.

What you eat can affect your LDL (bad) cholesterol. Knowing which fats raise LDL cholesterol and which ones don't can help you lower your risk of heart disease and stroke.

Your body naturally produces all the LDL cholesterol you need. Eating foods containing saturated and trans fats causes your body to produce even more LDL, raising the level of "bad" cholesterol in your blood.

It's worth understanding the different kinds of fats: Trans fat, saturated and unsaturated.

### Trans Fat

Trans fats (or trans fatty acids) are created in an industrial process that adds hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid. Another name for trans fats is "partially hydrogenated oils."

Trans fats raise your bad (LDL) cholesterol levels and lower your good (HDL) cholesterol levels. These changes are associated with a higher risk of heart disease.

Trans fats are found in many fried foods. Baked goods, such as pastries, pizza dough, pie crust, cookies and crackers also can also contain trans fats.

Since 2006, the FDA has required trans fat content to be listed on the Nutrition Facts panel of packaged foods.

The American Heart Association recommends that adults who would benefit from lowering LDL cholesterol eliminate trans fat from their diet.

To find the amount of trans fats in a particular packaged food, look at the Nutrition Facts panel. Companies must list any measurable amount of trans fat (0.5 grams or more per serving) in a separate line in the "Total Fat" section of the panel, directly beneath the line for "Saturated Fat." This means if a food package states 0 grams of trans fats, it might still have some trans fats if the amount per serving is less than 0.5 g. Make sure to check the ingredients list for "partially hydrogenated oil."

### Saturated fat

Saturated fats are fat molecules that are "saturated" with hydrogen molecules. They are typically solids at room temperature.

Saturated fats occur naturally in many foods – primarily meat and dairy products. Beef, lamb, pork on poultry (with the skin on) contain saturated fats, as do butter, cream and cheese made from whole or 2 percent milk. Plant-based foods that contain saturated fats include coconut, coconut oil and cocoa butter, as well as palm oil and palm kernel oil (often called tropical oils).

*For people who need to lower their cholesterol, the American Heart Association recommends reducing saturated fat to no more than 5 to 6 percent of total daily calories.* For someone eating 2,000 calories a day, that's about 11 to 13 grams of saturated fat.

### Unsaturated fat

There are two kinds of unsaturated fats: monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. Monounsaturated fats have one ("mono") unsaturated carbon bond in the molecule. Both of these unsaturated fats are typically liquid at room temperature.

Eaten in moderation, both kinds of unsaturated fats may help to improve your blood cholesterol when used in place of saturated and trans fats.

Unsaturated fats are found in fish (such as salmon, trout and herring), and in plant-based foods such as avocados, olives and walnuts. Liquid vegetable oils, such as soybean, corn, safflower, canola, olive and sunflower, also contain unsaturated fats.

### Limiting saturated and trans fats

Here are some ways to lower your intake of saturated and trans fats:

- Maintain a diet that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, poultry, fish and nuts. Also limit red meat as well as sugary foods and beverages.
- Opt for naturally occurring unhydrogenated vegetable oils such as canola, safflower, sunflower or olive oil.
- Look for processed foods made with unhydrogenated oil rather than saturated fat or hydrogenated (or partially hydrogenated) vegetable oils.
- Doughnuts, cookies, crackers, muffins, pies and cakes are examples of foods high in trans fat. Don't eat them often.
- Limit commercially fried foods and baked goods made with shortening or partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. These foods are very high in fat, and it's likely to be trans fat.
- Limit fried fast food. Commercial shortening and deep-frying fats are still made by hydrogenation and contain saturated and trans fats.

Source: *The American Heart Association*

