



The Benefits of Unsaturated Fats

Unsaturated fats, which are liquid at room temperature, are considered beneficial fats because they can improve blood cholesterol levels, ease inflammation, stabilize heart rhythms, and play a number of other beneficial roles

There are two types of “good” unsaturated fats:

- 1. Monounsaturated fats**
- 2. Polyunsaturated fats**

Most people don't eat enough beneficial unsaturated fats. The American Heart Association suggests that 8-10 percent of daily calories should come from polyunsaturated fats, and there is evidence that eating more polyunsaturated fat—up to 15 percent of daily calories—in place of saturated fat can lower heart disease risk. (1)

- (1) Mozaffarian, D., R. Micha, and S. Wallace, *Effects on coronary heart disease of increasing polyunsaturated fat in place of saturated fat: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials*. *PLoS Med*, 2010. 7(3): p. e1000252.

Dutch researchers conducted an analysis of 60 trials that examined the effects of carbohydrates and various fats on blood lipid levels. In trials in which polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats were eaten in place of carbohydrates, these good fats decreased levels of harmful LDL cholesterol and increased protective HDL cholesterol. (2)

- (2) Mensink, R.P., et al., *Effects of dietary fatty acids and carbohydrates on the ratio of serum total to HDL cholesterol and on serum lipids and apolipoproteins: a meta-analysis of 60 controlled trials*. *Am J Clin Nutr*, 2003. 77(5): p. 1146-55.

A randomized trial known as the Optimal Macronutrient Intake Trial for Heart Health (OmniHeart) showed that replacing a carbohydrate-rich diet with one rich in unsaturated fat, predominantly monounsaturated fats, lowers blood pressure, improves lipid levels, and reduces the estimated cardiovascular risk. (3)

- (3) Appel, L.J., et al., *Effects of protein, monounsaturated fat, and carbohydrate intake on blood pressure and serum lipids: results of the OmniHeart randomized trial*. *JAMA*, 2005. 294(19): p. 2455-64.