

Background information for course leader

Fats are an important part of our diet. They provide us with energy and some important vitamins (A & D). Vitamin D makes sure you absorb enough calcium for your bones and teeth and helps you have a healthy immune system to fight disease. Vitamin A helps us have healthy eyes. There are few other nutrients in fat.

Should adults with learning disabilities take a vitamin D supplement?

The current advice from SACN (Scottish Advisory Committee on Nutrition) is that: 'everyone aged 5 years and above should consider taking a daily supplement of Vitamin D particularly during the winter months'. Consideration should be made to those who are

- underweight
- wheelchair bound/have impaired mobility
- those living with support
- have a history of epilepsy
- have a history of bone fractures

Fat

Eating too much fat is unhealthy. Fat has the most **calories** per gram than all the other foods.

Fat = 9 calories (kcal) per gram
Alcohol = 7 calories (kcal) per gram
Sugar = 4 calories (kcal) per gram

So cutting down on the amount of fat we eat will help our health and our waistlines.

Saturated fat is converted into cholesterol in the body. Cholesterol is a fatty substance that can build up in the blood stream and settle on blood vessel walls. These cholesterol deposits can get thicker and thicker over time and eventually cause the blood vessel to block. As the cholesterol builds up, it puts a great strain on the heart because it is difficult to get blood pumped through a smaller and smaller opening. If a complete blockage occurs, this will result in a heart attack or stroke.

Being overweight increases our chances of developing health conditions:

- Heart disease
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Joint problems
- Some cancers

Types of fat:

- Saturated – Less healthy because they raise our cholesterol levels and increase our risk of heart disease
- Monounsaturated – Better for us as they help reduce cholesterol levels
- Polyunsaturated – Better for us as they do not raise cholesterol levels
- Omega 3 Fats – Essential fatty acids which we need to eat to prevent the blood from clotting, help regulate the heart rhythm
- Trans Fats – Hydrogenated vegetable oils have been processed to make them hard, found in processed foods, they raise our cholesterol levels

We should limit or avoid Saturated fat which are hard fats from animal sources such as:

- Butter
- Hard Cheese
- Visible fat on meats
- Processed meat
- Biscuits
- Cakes
- Cream
- Pastries
- Deep fried food
- Take away food
- Ice cream

We should include unsaturated fats in our diet. These are usually liquid fats and include:

- Olive oil
- Rapeseed oil
- Sunflower oil
- Nuts and seeds
- Some margarines
- Oily fish – herring, mackerel, sardines, salmon, trout, fresh tuna

Number of teaspoons of fat in each food item:

Food	Kcal	Grams of fat	Number of teaspoons of fat
Portion of chip-shop chips	956	50g	10
Portion of oven chips	212	25g	5
Fried rice (200g)	336	12.5g	2 ½
Boiled rice (200g)	258	0.56	Less than 1
1 packet of crisps (35g)	184	11 ½	2 ½
1 packet of low fat crisps (28g)	131	6	1
Cheddar cheese (60g/2oz)	226	18.6	4
Low fat cheddar cheese	96	4g	1
An individual fruit pie	286	14g	3
A fruit scone	139	4g	Less than 1
Custard cream	63	3	Less than 1
Jaffa cake	45	1	Less than 1
Pepperoni pizza 14 inch	2884	121g	24
Ham & pineapple pizza	1632	82g	16

Reference Intakes (RIs):

Needed by average adults of normal weight and average activity levels

Each day	women	men
Calories (Kcal)	2000	2500
Fat (g)	70	95

Reference Intakes (RIs) are discussed more fully in the food labelling session.

How to reduce intake of bad fats:

- Avoid burgers, pies, pastries, some pizzas and deep fried foods, e.g. 'suppers'.
- Don't eat skin from chicken.
- Choose leaner meat and don't eat any visible fat.
- Avoid processed meats such as chopped pork, salami and pepperoni where you can see the grease/fat – choose leaner cold meats such as turkey breast/lean ham/chicken slices.
- Choose a lower fat cheese type
- Cut down on puddings and cream – have fresh fruit or low fat yogurt instead.
- Cut down on cakes and biscuits.
- Choose a small chocolate bar or a dark chocolate bar
- Choose lower fat crisps.
- Choose a healthier carry out.