Summary sheet 12b

Healthy eating Part two

British Heart Foundation

What types of fat are there and how can healthier options help your heart?

Types of fat

All fats are made up of a combination of different fats – **saturated fats**, **monounsaturated fats** and **polyunsaturated fats**. Eating a diet that is low in saturated fat can lower your blood cholesterol level, help prevent you putting on weight, and so can help to reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.

Choosing healthier fats that are mainly mono or polyunsaturated instead of mainly saturated can help to protect your heart. But all fats are high in calories, so limit the amount of all the fats you eat, especially if you are watching your weight.

Where types of fat are found

Unsaturated fats			Saturated fats	Trans fats
Monounsaturated fats	**Polyunsaturated fats**	**Omega-3 fats**		
• olive oil and rapeseed oil • avocado • nuts and seeds (almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, peanuts and pistachios). Some margarines and spreads are made from monounsaturated fats.	• corn oil, sunflower oil and soya oil • nuts and seeds (walnuts, pine nuts, sesame seeds and sunflower seeds). Some margarines and spreads are made from polyunsaturated fats.	• fish oil • oily fish such as herring, mackerel, pilchards, sardines, salmon, trout and fresh tuna.	• butter • hard cheese • fatty meat • meat products • biscuits • cakes • cream • lard • dripping • suet • ghee • coconut oil and palm oil.	• pastries • cakes • biscuits • crackers • hard margarines. Foods that have 'hydrogenated oil or fat' or 'partially hydrogenated oil or fat' in the list of ingredients may contain trans fats.

Practical tips

- Use less of whatever type of oil you use. Instead of pouring oil directly into the pan, use a spoon to measure it. Gradually reduce the amount you use.
- Use oils that are high in unsaturated fats rather than saturated fats like butter, lard or ghee.
- Grill, steam or poach your food, rather than frying it.
- Try baking samosa and pakora instead of frying them and have boiled, mashed or jacket potatoes (without adding butter) instead of chips.
- Use lean meat and trim off any visible fat. And remove the skin from chicken.
- Spoon off any excess fat from curries and stews.
- Use a low-fat spread instead of butter or margarine, and spread it thinly.
- Choose semi-skimmed, 1% or skimmed rather than full-fat milk.

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How food labels can help you check the fat content in your food

Look at the nutrition information label on the packaging[1]. Compare the 'per 100g' figures with the table below.

Fat content per 100g of food	
This is **a lot**: • 20g of **fat** or more • 5g of **saturates** or more	This is **a little**: • 3g of **fat** or less • 1.5g of **saturates** or less

Does too much salt affect your heart?

People who have a lot of salt in their diet are more likely to have high blood pressure. Most people eat far more salt than they need. It is recommended that adults have no more than 6g of salt a day[2] – that's about one teaspoonful.

How food labels can help you check the salt content in your food

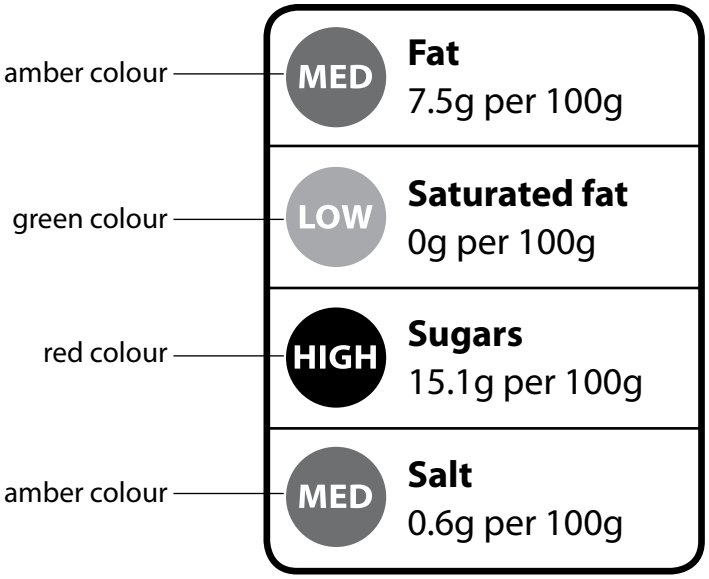
Look at the nutrition information label on the packaging[1]. Compare the 'per 100g' figures with the table below.

Salt content per 100g of food	
This is **a lot**: 1.5g of **salt** or more 0.6g of **sodium** or more	This is **a little**: 0.3g of **salt** or less 0.1g of **sodium** or less

How do food labels work?

Food labels provide important information about the nutritional value of food.

The Multiple Traffic Light model



Many retailers and manufacturers now provide 'at a glance' nutritional information on the front of packs. The Multiple Traffic Light model clearly indicates the relative levels of fats, saturated fat, sugar and salt in a food product, by labelling each nutrient as either high (red), medium (amber) or low (green).

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All measures per 100g	LOW **Low (green light) –** a healthier choice	MED **Medium (amber light) –** OK most of the time	HIGH **High (red light) –** just occasionally
Sugars	5g or less	5.1g - 15g	More than 15g
Fat	3g or less	3.1g - 20g	More than 20g
Saturates	1.5g or less	1.6g - 5g	More than 5g
Salt	0.30g or less	0.31g - 1.5g	More than 1.5g

Ready meals Levels will always be high if they are shown as:			
Sugars **Over 18g** or **20% GDA**	Fat **Over 21g** or **30% GDA**	Saturates **Over 6g** or **30% GDA**	Salt **Over 2.4g** or **40% GDA**

The model also shows the amount of these nutrients in a serving of the food. Foods with a red light should only be eaten occasionally. Foods with amber lights are fine to eat most of the time but those with green lights are the healthiest choices, so pick those with greens and ambers as much as possible

The Guideline Daily Amounts (GDA) model

Some food retailers and manufacturers use models based on Guideline Daily Amounts (GDA). These show how much a food contributes towards your guideline daily amounts (GDAs) for key nutrients. The GDAs for the most important nutrients listed on food labels are:

	Men	**Women**
Fat (total)	95g	70g
of which saturates	30g	20g
Salt	6g	6g
Sugar	120g	90g

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For more information

bhf.org.uk

BHF Heart Helpline: 0300 330 3311 – for information and support on anything related to heart health. The service is available in English only. Phone lines open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, similar cost to 01 or 02 numbers.

BHF booklets:

Food should be fun … and healthy! (in English)
Guide to food labelling (in English)
Cut the saturated fat (in English)
Cut down on salt (in English & Welsh)
Eating for your heart (in English)
Healthy eating for a healthy heart (aimed at South Asians, in English and five South Asian languages)
Looking after your heart (aimed at South Asians, in English and five South Asian languages)

To order these *free* resources, call the **BHF Orderline** on **0870 600 6566**

Other organisations:

British Dietetic Association website: **www.bda.uk.com**
Change for life website: **www.nhs.uk/change4life**
Food Standards Agency website:**www.eatwell.gov.uk**
Heart UK (The cholesterol charity) Helpline: 0845 450 5988
www.heartuk.org.uk Email: **ask@heartuk.org.uk**

1. Food Standards Agency. 2004. Labelling Claims. London: Food Standards Agency Publications. www.food.gov.uk
2. Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition. 2003. Salt and Health. London: TSO.

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