

The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

Rosemary Szabadka, Community Nutritionist, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority

Good fat, bad fat, what does it mean? You need fat in your diet because it provides energy and nutrients that your body needs. Some fats are better for you than others. Making sure you are eating the right type of fat can be tricky. Reading food labels will tell you what type of fat is found in the foods you eat. Here is a quick summary of the different types of fat you will find on a food label.

THE GOOD

Unsaturated fats are the "good" heart-healthy fats. These fats are liquid at room temperature. Good examples include: olive oil, canola oil, and the fat in avocados, nuts and fatty fish like salmon, char, herring, mackerel, sardines, and trout. Did you know that Canada's Food Guide recommends two to three tablespoons of unsaturated fat per day? Try to choose foods with unsaturated fat every day.

THE BAD

Saturated fats are the "bad" fats even though they can be found in some healthy foods. Eating too much saturated fat can lead to heart disease and other health problems. Saturated fats are found in meats, cheese, butter, lard and in tropical oils such as coconut oil, palm kernel oil, and palm oils. Highly saturated fats are solid



at room temperature. To reduce the amount of saturated fat in your diet, choose lean, non-fatty meats, remove skin from poultry, and bake, broil or steam foods instead of frying. Choose lower fat dairy products and limit butter and lard. Read food labels to ensure foods do not contain tropical oils.

THE UGLY

Trans fats are the "ugly" fats. This type of fat increases your blood cholesterol, which can cause heart disease. Trans fats not only raise bad cholesterol levels, they lower good cholesterol levels. You can find trans fats in vegetable shortening, some margarines, and many processed and baked foods like crackers, chips, cookies and donuts. The word "hydrogenated" on a food label means that the food contains trans fat. Limit these "ugly" fats by reading food labels to be sure the food you buy has little or no trans fat.

How to Figure Out the Fat on a Cracker Food Label

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size Per 9 crackers (20g)	←
Calories 110	
Total Fat 6g	←
Saturate 2.5g	←
+Trans 0.5g	
Unsaturated 3g	

Nutrition Panel

- Look at the serving size first. Your nutrient intake will depend on how many crackers you eat.
- Nine crackers have 6 grams of fat. A better choice would be crackers that have less than 3 grams per serving size.
- Limiting your intake of saturated and trans fats will help reduce your risk of developing heart disease. Aim for little or no trans fat and less than 1 gram of saturated fat.

Ingredients List

- Hydrogenated oil means a Trans Fat
- Palm Oil is a Tropical Oil and a Saturated Fat
- Cheddar Cheese Powder may have Saturated Fat
- Modified Milk Solids may have Saturated Fat
- Sunflower Oil is an Unsaturated Fat

Ingredients: Enriched Wheat Flour, Hydrogenated Cottonseed Oil, Palm Oil, Modified Milk Ingredients, Sugar, Sunflower Oil, Cheddar Cheese Powder, Salt, Sodium Bicarbonate, Monocalcium Phosphate, Ammonium Phosphate, Soya Lecithin, Disodium Phosphate, Natural Flavour, Colour, Lactic Acid