

# Food For Thought

Dietary fat helps our body absorb vitamins A, D, E, and K and provides essential fats our body can't manufacture. But, we don't need much fat to meet these needs; as little as 3 to 5 teaspoons a day, depending on the sources, provide all the essential fat we need. You can get this needed fat by consuming foods which contain fat naturally (such as meat, milk and breads) and through the fat that you add to your diet (such as margarine, oil and salad dressings). Since fat is a concentrated source of calories, restricting the amount of fat you add to your diet can be the single most important activity for reducing your calorie intake.

Fats are often described as saturated, monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats. The type of fat you eat can influence your risk for heart disease. Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats help lower blood cholesterol levels. Saturated fats tend to raise cholesterol. Monounsaturated fats also reduce the "bad" (LDL) cholesterol but leave the "good" (HDL) cholesterol alone. For a healthy heart, reduce your overall consumption of fat and cholesterol. Of the fat you do eat, try more poly and monounsaturated fat (such as canola oil) and less saturated fat (such as butter and animal fats). Remember, fats from animal sources contribute cholesterol to your diet, too.

## SERVING SIZES

- ▶ 1 teaspoon of margarine, mayonnaise or butter; 2 teaspoons of diet margarine or mayonnaise
- ▶ 1 tablespoon of salad dressing; 2 tablespoons of reduced-fat salad dressing

## PRACTICAL TIPS

- ▶ Use non stick cooking spray rather than oil or shortening.
- ▶ Use a rack for roasting so meat won't sit in the fat drippings.
- ▶ When making soup or gravy, skim off the fat first by chilling the soup or gravy base. When chilled, the fat will harden and can be lifted off easily.
- ▶ Use wine or fruit juice to baste meat instead of drippings.
- ▶ Steam or poach foods rather than fry them.
- ▶ Switch to reduced fat or fat free versions of your favorite dressings.
- ▶ Avoid butter and other animal fats to reduce your cholesterol consumption.



## ACTIVITY

A specific goal of the dietary guidelines is to keep the fat content of your diet to less than 30% calories from fat. A simple approach to monitoring your success towards achieving this goal is through "fat gram counting." Review the nutrition facts panels for all the foods you are eating and take note of the fat content (in grams) on the chart below. Make sure you keep your fat intake below the recommended level.

1000 Calorie Diet	1200 Calorie Diet
Less than 33 grams of fat	Less than 40 grams of fat

Breakfast	Fat (gms)	Lunch	Fat (gms)	Dinner	Fat (gms)	Nutritional Products	Fat (gms)
Subtotal	Subtotal			Subtotal		Subtotal	
						Total of the 4 columns	

Add up the fat (grams) from breakfast, lunch, dinner and your **Advanced Health Systems®** Nutritional Food Products. If you are higher than the recommended level, identify what food choices are contributing the highest amount of fat and try a lower fat alternative next time.