Nuts, Oils, Dressings, and Spreads

Session 1

Background Information
Tips
Goals
Background Information

Nuts, Oils, Dressings, and Spreads

**Eating Fats**

There are three types of fat we'll focus on in this program:

- **Healthy fats** (polyunsaturated fats), such as those found in vegetable oils, nuts, some dressings and spreads, and fish.
- **Unhealthy fats** (trans fats), such as those found in most stick margarine and shortening, some baked goods, some packaged snack foods, and fried foods from some restaurants.
- **Other fats** (saturated fats), such as those found in beef, pork, and dairy products.

For healthy eating, you should eat foods with healthy fats each day and try to avoid foods with unhealthy fats.

**What Do We Mean by Healthy Fat?**

Healthy fats mostly come from plants or fish.

Healthy fats can be found in the following oils and foods:

- Vegetable oils, like canola, soybean, olive, safflower, sunflower, peanut, and corn oils.
- Salad dressings made with the healthy vegetable oils listed above.
- Trans fat free margarine spread (generally in soft/tub form).
- Fish, such as tuna, herring, salmon, and lake trout.
- Nuts (like peanuts, pecans, walnuts, and almonds) and nut butters.

**How Much Healthy Fat Do I Need Each Day?**

Two to six servings each day of foods that are high in healthy fats is a good goal. Serving sizes for common foods that contain healthy fat are:

- Nuts: a small handful
- Fish: three ounces (about a pack of cards)
- Healthy salad dressing: one to two tablespoons
- Mayonnaise: one tablespoon
- Avocado: one quarter

Eat Nuts Often
There Are Many Ways to Fit Heart Healthy Fats Into Your Eating Plan

These include:

- Eating nuts and nut butters (like peanut butter) often.
- Eating fish at least one time per week.
- Choosing healthy oils, salad dressings, and spreads.

Eat Nuts and Nut Butters Often

Nuts are a great source of healthy fats. Many studies have shown that people who eat nuts are less likely to get heart disease.

To add more heart healthy nuts and nut butters:

- Eat nuts or nut butters at least three or more times a week. A handful of nuts (one quarter cup or about one ounce) or two tablespoons of nut butter count as one serving.

Choosing Healthy Oils

Healthy oils include: canola, soybean, olive, safflower, sunflower, peanut, and corn oil. Also, many stores sell “vegetable oil,” which is a combination of different oils.

To eat more healthy oils:

- Use healthy oils often when you are cooking, sautéing, and frying. It is also good to use healthy oils in salad dressing.
- Cut down on the cost of expensive oils, like olive oil, by using it for dipping bread and salad dressings. Use less expensive oils for cooking, sautéing and frying.
Choosing Healthy Salad Dressings

Many people think low- or no-fat salad dressings are good for your health. In fact, regular salad dressings contain healthy vegetable oils and are better for your health. Also, lower-fat and no-fat dressings may contain more salt and sugar than regular dressings.

To choose healthy salad dressings:

- Choose regular salad dressing instead of low-fat or no-fat dressing.

- For less salty but still tasty salad dressings, see pages 98-100 of the Cookbook.

Choosing Healthy Spreads

Spreads (such as those you put on your bread or use in sandwiches) are an easy place to get more heart healthy fats.

To choose healthy spreads:

- Use trans fat free margarines. These are made from vegetable oils and are a good choice for spreads and for cooking. Most are in tub form.

- Use regular mayonnaise (not the reduced fat or no-fat products) for sandwiches. Mayonnaise is made from vegetable oils (usually soybean or canola oil) and is high in healthy fats.

- When using mayonnaise, cut back a bit on other sandwich filling or use less bread because mayonnaise does add calories to the sandwich.

Following the tips you’ve seen on the last few pages can take you a long way toward heart healthy eating. But, there is more to know about fats.
What Are Unhealthy Fats?

Unhealthy fats (also called trans fats) are made when liquid vegetable oils are turned into solid fats for margarine, shortening, or deep-fat frying. Trans fats are not healthy and can cause heart disease.

Trans fats can be found in the following foods:
- Some store-bought baked goods and packaged snack foods.
- Some fried foods and biscuits from restaurants, though many restaurants are working to lower the trans fats in their foods.
- Stick margarine.
- Most shortening.

How Often Can I Eat Foods That Contain Trans Fats?

Trans fats can increase your chances of developing heart disease, even in small amounts. Thus, it is important to eat as little trans fat as possible. Keep the following things in mind:

- One serving of stick margarine can have 2.5 grams of unhealthy fat (this is a pretty large amount of trans fats).
- Food labels can say “zero trans fat” when a food has less than 0.5 grams (500 mg) of trans fats per serving. This means you could be eating trans fats even when you see “zero” on the label!
- The only way to know for sure if a food has trans fats is to look at the ingredients on the food label. If you see “partially hydrogenated” or “hydrogenated” oil in the ingredients, you are eating a food that contains trans fats.

Remember, to avoid health problems, it is best to eat as little trans fat as possible.

What Are Other Sources of Fats in the Diet?

Another major source of fat in the diet are saturated fats. These fats are mostly found in food from animal sources such as beef, pork, and dairy.

In the past, experts thought saturated fat was linked to an increased risk for heart disease. However, recent studies suggest saturated fat does not increase heart disease risk. That said, saturated fat does not decrease the risk of heart disease, like foods with healthy fats noted above, and other foods like vegetables and fruits, and whole grains. Foods high in saturated fat may also increase the chance of some cancers; for example, people who eat large amounts of red meat are at higher risk for colon cancer.

Foods high in saturated fat include:
- Red meat, including beef, pork, lamb. Note: while red meats do not seem to increase the risk of heart disease, processed meats (bacon, sausage, hot dogs, bologna, and deli meats like roast beef, turkey, and ham) do increase this risk and should not be eaten often.
- Dairy products (except skim and very low-fat dairy) including butter and cream.
- Lard.
- “Tropical vegetable oil,” including palm and coconut oil.
How Often Can I Eat Foods That Contain High Amounts of Saturated Fats?

It is fine to eat foods with saturated fat often as long as you also eat the healthy foods suggested by this program. In other words, there needs to be “room in your eating plan” to eat healthy fats, fruits and vegetables, and whole grains each day.

Won’t Eating More Fat Cause Me to Gain Weight?

Many people think eating foods high in fats can cause them to get fat. That is because, in the past, we were taught low-fat diets were best for losing weight and keeping it off. Based on the most recent studies this does not appear to be true.

Because fat in the diet helps you feel full for longer, the number of calories you eat does not necessarily go up with higher amounts of fat in the diet. And eating healthier fats may help you avoid snacking more or eating foods with less healthy ingredients.

For example: If you add an oil-based dressing to salad, it will increase the calories compared to a fat-free dressing. But, the salad will be more filling and you will be less likely to fill up on other, less healthy foods.

Summary

Here is a summary of key points about Nuts, Oils, Dressings, and Spreads:

- To reduce heart disease risk, it is important to eat healthy fats on a daily basis.
- Make a plan to get rid of all trans fats! You don’t need any. Trans fats are mostly found in processed foods or cooking oils used in restaurants, so preparing more of your own foods from scratch at home is a good approach.
Nuts, Oils, Dressings, and Spreads

Check the goals you want to work on for the next contact.

1. Choose nuts and nut butters often. Try to eat three or more servings each week.
   - Enjoy a variety of nuts (pecans, peanuts, walnuts, almonds, cashews) and nut butters, like peanut butter.
   - A serving is a handful of nuts (one quarter cup or about one ounce) or two tablespoons of nut butter (about the size of a ping-pong ball).
   - Try a peanut butter sandwich on whole grain bread, or peanut butter on celery or an apple. These can make a tasty lunch or snack!
   - Unsalted or lightly salted nuts or all natural nut butters are good choices, but regular nuts and nut butters are also good choices.

2. Choose trans fat free margarine.
   - For spreads, trans fat free margarine is preferred because it contains healthy vegetable oil, but butter on occasion is okay.
   - When you use margarine look for tub or squeeze margarines that say trans fat free.
   - Don’t use regular stick margarines, which are usually high in trans fats.

3. Use healthful toppings like trans fat free margarine or vegetable oil for bread and other foods. Aim for three or more servings per week.
   - Margarine that does not contain trans fat is a healthful choice for topping bread and other foods.
   - Consider dipping bread in olive oil or a mix of olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

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4. **Use healthy oils for frying, sautéing, and baking.**
   - Use the following oils for sautéing, frying, cooking, and baking: olive, canola, safflower, sunflower, corn, peanut, and soybean oil. Also, some stores sell “vegetable oil,” which is a mix of these oils and is also a good choice.
   - When frying, sautéing, or baking, use the right oil for the job. Olive oil or canola oil are best for everyday sautéing or frying at low to medium high temperatures. For high heat (to stir fry or deep fry), use peanut, soybean, sunflower, or corn oil.
   - For everyday cooking, use oils that don’t cost too much. Save extra virgin olive oil for salad dressing and dipping. Use other vegetable oils for frying, sautéing, and baking.

5. **Choose healthy salad dressings. Aim for three or more servings per week.**
   - For store-bought, use regular rather than low-fat or fat-free dressings. Regular store-bought salad dressings contain the healthy types of vegetable oil. Fat-free dressings are often higher in sodium and sugar.
   - Consider making your own salad dressing (see Cookbook, pages 98-100).
   - Try to select salad dressings with less than 350 mg of sodium per serving. See pages C-81 and C-82 for tips on reading food labels.

6. **Store-bought mayonnaise has fats that are good for your heart. Aim for three or more servings per week.**
   - Use regular store-bought mayonnaise. It is usually made with soybean or canola oil, both good oils for your heart.
   - A serving of mayonnaise is about one tablespoon.
My Goals and First Steps

To make changes, it is important to make goals and keep track of your progress. On the other side of this sheet, write down the two goals you selected to work on today. Then write down your “First Steps” for achieving these goals. First Steps should be specific and realistic to get you started.

To plan First Steps, think about:

- When you will start working towards this goal.
- What you need to get started.
- If you can actually reach the goal.

Also, the other side of this sheet has two tables to help you keep track of your progress.
My Goals and First Steps

Date: ______________________

Goal 1: ____________________________________________

______________________________________

______________________________________

First Steps: _______________________________________

______________________________________

______________________________________

Goal 2: ____________________________________________

______________________________________

______________________________________

First Steps: _______________________________________

______________________________________

______________________________________

Place this sheet where you will see it often (refrigerator or bathroom mirror). You may monitor goals by the week (left side of table) or by the day (right side of table).

GOAL 1: Did you meet your goal? (Circle ☑ for Yes, or ☒ for No)

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GOAL 2: Did you meet your goal? (Circle ☑ for Yes, or ☒ for No)

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