

Low-Fat Diet and Menu

Intended use

The low-fat diet is intended for use by individuals who have maldigestion or malabsorption of fat, such as small bowel resection, pancreatic disease, gastroparesis, fatty liver, or gallstones. The low-fat diet restricts fat intake to 40–60 grams (g) of fat/day by limiting high-fat food and beverage sources.

Note: This version of the low-fat diet is not intended for individuals with heart disease (access the therapeutic lifestyle changes [TLC] diet at <http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/114/1/82.full.pdf>). Further, this is not an optimal approach for weight loss, because calorically dense, low-fat alternatives such as sugar are not restricted.

While this diet is nutritionally adequate according to the Recommended Dietary Allowances, individuals may require supplementation of fat-soluble vitamins, minerals, or high-calorie, low-fat supplements because of the nature of their disease.

Reading labels

The Nutrition Facts panel lists the nutrition information about a product. If you are unsure if a food fits into the “eat more of these” or “avoid” column, look at the “Total Fat” grams, located near the top of the panel. Make sure you adjust your serving size to the portion size listed at the top of the label.

Sample label for
Macaroni & Cheese

1 Start Here →

2 Check Calories

3 Limit these Nutrients

4 Get Enough of these Nutrients

5 Footnote

6 Quick Guide to % DV

- 5% or less is Low
- 20% or more is High

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g) Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories 2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g	375g
Dietary Fiber	25g	30g

Labeling terms

Term	Example	Definition
Fat free	Skim milk, salad dressing, and pudding	<0.5 g fat
Low fat	Low-fat cheese	≤3 g fat
Extra lean	Extra-lean pork and beef	<5 g fat
Lean	Pork, beef, and poultry	<10 g fat
Less or reduced	Less-fat or reduced-fat salad dressing	25% less than the regular equivalent
Light or lite	Lite margarine or salad dressing	50% less than the regular equivalent

It is important to understand that while products that claim that they are lower in cholesterol, saturated fat, and trans fat are healthier selections that may positively

reduce the total fat content of a meal, this is not a direct indication that these foods are acceptable on a low-fat diet.

Low-fat diet by food groups

Food Group	Eat More of These	Avoid These Foods
<p>Dairy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skim or soy milk • ½% or 1% milk • Fat-free yogurt • Fat-free cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2% or whole milk • Cream • Eggnog • Milk shakes
<p>Meat</p> <p>Limit=5–6 ounces (oz)/day</p> <p>Guide to portions: 3 oz=deck of cards 1 oz=one index finger</p>	<p>One serving equals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 oz extra lean or lean meat or deli meat • 1 oz fish • 1 oz skinless poultry • Textured vegetable protein • ¼ cup (C) water-packed tuna or salmon • 1 egg • 1½ oz low-fat cheese • Note: Textured vegetable protein that contains <0.5 g fat/oz is considered fat free (use without restriction) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bacon • Sausage • Luncheon meats • Hot dogs • Salami • Fish canned in oil • Fried meats • Convenience and fast-food meals • Heavily marbled meats • Regular cheese • Regular cream cheese
<p>Fruit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All are encouraged 	
<p>Vegetables</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All are encouraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No fried vegetables
<p>Grain*</p> <p>6–11 servings/day</p> <p>*Grain choices must contain <3 g fat/serving</p>	<p>One serving equals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice whole-grain bread • ½ English muffin, bagel, or bun • ½ C rice or pasta • ½ C hot cereal • ¾ C cold cereal • 1 oz fat-free crackers or pretzels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stuffing • Regular chips • Regular crackers • Regular bars • Biscuits • Muffins • Doughnuts • Baked goods • Grilled, fried, or cheesy breads

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 C fat-free popcorn 	
<p>Fat</p> <p>Limit=3 servings/day (includes fat added in cooking)</p> <p>Guide to portions: 1 tablespoon (Tbsp)= thumb tip</p>	<p>One serving equals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 teaspoon (tsp) regular or 2 tsp lite butter, margarine, or oil • 1 Tbsp regular or 2 Tbsp lite mayonnaise, cream cheese, or salad dressing • 1/8 avocado • 2 tsp peanut butter • 10 peanuts • 8 olives 	
<p>Miscellaneous</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fat-free hot chocolate • Carnation® Instant Breakfast® made with skim milk • Sugar • Jelly • Mustard • Ketchup • Sherbet • Jell-O® • Angel food cake • Pudding made with skim milk • Popsicles® 	<p>Discuss the use of alcohol, caffeine, and soda with your dietitian.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice cream • Cakes • Pies • Cookies • Regular cream-based soups

Sample menu

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 fluid oz (fl oz) orange juice • ¾ C Cheerios® • 8 fl oz skim milk • ½ banana • 1 scrambled egg • 1 slice toast • 1 egg • 1 tsp margarine • Jelly • Coffee or tea • Sugar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-grain sandwich with 2 oz fat-free deli meat, tomato, lettuce, onion, mustard, and fat-free mayonnaise • 1 C skim milk • 1 C broth-based soup • 1 apple or 1 C cut-up fruit • 1½ C mixed salad greens • 2 Tbsp lite salad dressing • Coffee or tea • Sugar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 oz skinless, white meat chicken breast (baked) • 1 C skim milk • 1 piece corn on the cob • 1 C cooked vegetables • 1 whole-grain dinner roll • 1 tsp margarine • 1 C grapes or cut fruit • Coffee or tea • Sugar

References and recommended readings

American College of Gastroenterology. Digestive health tips. Available at: <http://www.acg.gi.org/patients/healthtips.asp>. Accessed October 8, 2012.

American Heart Association Nutrition Committee, Lichtenstein AH, Appel LJ, et al. Diet and lifestyle recommendations revision 2006: a scientific statement from the American Heart Association Nutrition Committee. *Circulation* [serial online]. 2006;114:82-96. Available at: <http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/114/1/82.full.pdf>. Accessed October 8, 2012.

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MedlinePlus. Chronic pancreatitis. Available at: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000221.htm>. Accessed October 8, 2012.

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