

Integrative Medicine E-Letter
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Happy Spring



Spring is finally here!?! (Maybe) and it is a great time to take charge of your health. I would like to throw out a couple of comments on what I think is one of the most misinformed topics – fat.

Fat has had a very misunderstood history. Here recently, fat has been public enemy number one for those who want to lose weight or protect their heart. But it is important to clarify the truths about fat. Fat is essential for life. We have to have fat to function. The critical learning point here is that there are good fats and bad fats. When you understand and follow this principle, your body will be much healthier. Good fats include those from natural sources such as avocados (guacamole, delicious), nuts, coconut, fish, and flax. These sources provide fats that are essential for every cell in the body. Eating healthy fat improves health, and for many is necessary to LOSE weight.

Just as we need good fats, we have to avoid bad fats. Bad fats are any oils that have hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated. These fats are not friendly to the cells in our body and will lead to disease, especially heart disease, and may be even a greater risk for

cancer. I do not recommend anyone use margarine, or any form of margarine at this time no matter what it is. Yes, use butter when you need it. When you cook, use coconut oil if possible. Many fats are damaged by high heat, which is why most vegetable oils and frying in general produce chemicals that are hard on the body.

The often gross misconception is that fats from animal protein are bad. This requires some explanation because it depends on the source and the preparation method. Most people are not aware that beef that is fed grass throughout its life has a fat ratio similar to salmon. When we feed cows grains and corn, food that their stomachs were not meant to digest, the fat ratio changes very quickly, and for the worse. Grass fed beef can be a very healthy source of iron, B vitamins, and minerals, corn fed beef is not as healthy a choice. Healthy sources of eggs, chicken and even fish will play out the same picture as beef. The healthier the animal, the higher in vitamins it is. Animals of poor health will not be a great food source, and may even increase risk of food borne illness.

Please see the article below on [purehealthmd.com](http://www.purehealthmd.com/nutrition/healthy-eating/eating-well/grassfed-beef.html) for more discussion on grass-fed beef: <http://www.purehealthmd.com/nutrition/healthy-eating/eating-well/grassfed-beef.html> However, frying or charring any type of animal protein will not be healthy. Processed meats, such as bacon and sausage (and yes I do like the taste of these) are going to be much more of a problem than simple cuts of meat. Animal fats do not have to be avoided, but they do need to come from a healthy animal and cooked in a good way.

The reason I bring this up is that I still see the words “low fat” on baked goods and cookies, and I want you to know that it is doing you no good in terms of weight loss. The fat in most baked goods is some form of hydrogenated oil which is already unhealthy, and any fat that is replaced is going to be replaced with more sugar. It is amazing in the last 50 years how common sense in nutrition has been replaced with poor research and marketing. Go for the healthy fats Mother Nature gives us, and keep yourself even healthier.

Vitamin D:

I have talked about vitamin D frequently so I don't want to harp on this too much, but this country is in such desperate need of cancer prevention that I want everyone to understand the importance of vitamin D. Currently adequate vitamin D is linked to the prevention of 17 different cancers. It is easy to check vitamin D levels through a blood test called the 25 hydroxy vitamin D level, done just about anywhere. Optimal levels are 50 -70. If you are low consider more sun exposure if possible or supplement with vitamin D3.

Please note this newsletter's goal is to provide suggestions for optimal health, but each case is unique. I do not want to diagnose or treat just through the newsletter. If you have any questions or would like to make an appointment, please call us at 812-523-5865.