



# Counting Fat Grams

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## About This Kit

In previous kits you have learned “Foods to Choose” and “Foods to Decrease/Avoid” for a healthy diet. You have also learned how to measure and record servings of foods from the four food groups in your Food Diary. We have provided a daily meal plan that recommends a specific number of servings from each food group. This is an easy way for you to know how much to eat.

There is one more skill that will help you control the number of calories and the amount of fat you eat. In this kit you will:

- Step 1.** Know your daily target number of fat grams
- Step 2.** Record the grams of fat from the foods you eat

## Step 1

# Know Your Daily Target of Fat Grams

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Current recommendations include that 20 to 35 percent of your total calories each day should come from fat.

Using this guideline, your mentor will give you a daily fat grams target. Write the number on the front page of your Heart Institute Prevention and Rehabilitation Centre (HIPRC) Food Diary. Your goal is to keep your total fat grams *at or below* this number every day.

### See the Fat

It's hard to visualize a gram of fat. But you can see a teaspoon. One teaspoon equals about five grams of fat. Find your daily fat grams target on the chart below to know the number of teaspoons of fat you could have each day.

<i>Daily Fat Grams Target</i>	<i>Teaspoons of Fat</i>
	1 tsp = 5 mL
	1 tbsp = 15 mL
35	7
40	8
45	9
50	10
55	11
60	12 = 4 Tablespoons = ¼ cup
65	13
70	14
75	15

Notice that 60 grams of fat equals 12 teaspoons, which is the same as ¼ cup (65 mL). One-fourth cup is the size of the ladle used to serve salad dressings at most salad bars. One ladle of salad dressing is more fat than most people should eat all day.

### Know the Types of Fats

Related to weight management, all fats contain nine calories per gram and all are equally bad for you. Related to your health, all fats are not alike. There are three different types of fats.

*Saturated Fats* – These fats are usually solid at room temperature and are commonly found in animal products. Meats, poultry, egg yolks, and dairy products all contain saturated fats. Saturated fat is also found in a few vegetable products, such as coconut, palm and palm

kernel oil, and cocoa. Saturated fats cause your blood cholesterol to go up, especially your LDL (“bad”) cholesterol. You should avoid saturated fats as much as possible.

*Trans Fats* – These fats are found in hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated vegetable oils and vegetable shortening. They increase your blood cholesterol, especially your LDL (“bad”) and decrease your HDL (“good”) cholesterol. Trans fats are found in commercially processed foods such as crackers, cookies, chips, pies, pastries, fast foods like French fries, chicken wings, chicken nuggets, onion rings.

*Polyunsaturated Fats* – These fats are usually liquid at room temperature. Like all fats, polyunsaturated fats are high in calories. Unlike saturated fats, they don’t raise your LDL (“bad”) cholesterol. There are two major types of polyunsaturated fats: omega-6 and omega-3 fats. Vegetable oils such as safflower, sunflower, soybean, corn, and cottonseed are rich in omega-6. Oils from cold-water fish, such as salmon, trout, and mackerel are the main sources of omega-3 fats.

*Monounsaturated Fats* – These fats are also usually liquid at room temperature. Examples of this type of fat include olive and canola oils. These are the best types of oils and may cause a decrease in your LDL (“bad”) cholesterol and increase your HDL (“good”) cholesterol. Monounsaturated fats also contain nine calories per gram. Eating too much fat, even monounsaturated fats, will hinder your weight management efforts.

## Step 2

### Record the Grams of Fat You Eat

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Each day, as you record your number of servings from each food group, also record the number of fat grams in the serving. Read the food label to know the number of fat grams per serving of food. Make adjustments if you eat more or less than one serving.

If a food label is not available because you prepared the food yourself or purchased it from a restaurant, check the fat gram booklet or fitness wheel. Information about many common foods is given in this handy reference.

Write the fat grams to the right of each serving in your Food Diary. For example, a sandwich might have two slices of white bread, one ounce of turkey, one tablespoon of reduced calorie mayonnaise, one lettuce leaf, and one slice of tomato. Your entry would look like this:

<i>Grain products</i>	2 – 2g
<i>Meat &amp; alternatives</i>	½ - 0.8g
<i>Other foods</i>	1 – 5g

Your total fat grams for the sandwich would be 7.8 or 8 grams.

At the end of each day, total the number of fat grams you have eaten that day. Compare what you ate to your daily fat grams target goal.

#### **Tips for Cutting Fat**

Eat no more than six ounces or 200g (two servings) of lean meat, fish, or poultry each day. Eat chicken or turkey without skin and choose white meat instead of dark meat. Fat in meat is saturated fat and contains cholesterol. Generally, fish is a healthier choice than red meat or poultry.

Try to eat more meatless meals, such as beans and rice.

Eat no more than three egg yolks each week, including those used in cooking and baking. Fat in egg yolks is saturated fat and contains cholesterol.

Gradually cut back to drinking 1% fat or less for all milk products. Skim milk is best. Fat in dairy products is saturated fat and contains cholesterol.

Choose non-fat or fat-free sour cream, cream cheese, and yogurt.

Choose cheeses with 15% MF or less.

Choose whole grain breads and cereals.

Avoid breads made with eggs, lard, butter, shortening or added fat such as donuts, croissants, Danish pastries, egg bagels, egg noodles, fried snack crackers, biscuits, and some muffins.

Choose low-fat and fat-free salad dressings and sandwich spreads.

Avoid rich sauces and gravies made with cheese, cream, butter, or margarine.

Limit coconut and coconut milk.

Peanut butter, avocados, olives, seeds, and nuts contain healthy fats but are high in calories so use these in moderation.

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## Before Your Next Visit

**In the time between your visits with your mentor, you should read and complete your educational kits. Use this sheet to record your work. Think of this as “homework.”**

- Answer these questions about your current eating habits.

Are you becoming familiar with “Foods to Choose” and “Foods to Decrease/Avoid” in each of the four food groups? *Yes No*

During the past seven days, how many days did you eat the recommended number of servings from each of the four food groups? \_\_\_\_\_ *days*

Are you feeling hungry? *Yes No*  
*If yes, when* \_\_\_\_\_

Are you reading food labels when you shop for food? *Yes No*

Do you know the number of fat grams in most of the foods you eat? *Yes No*

During the past seven days, how many days did you achieve your target fat grams goal? \_\_\_\_\_ *days*

**Write any questions for your mentor here.**

