

Dietary Fat Counter for a Very Low Fat Diet

Information for patients



This leaflet gives information on the fat content of some common foods and drinks. The fat content of different brands may vary, so it is best to check the labels of the brands you use. When calculating the fat in your meal, remember to include any additional fat or oil you use in cooking.

Your care team will have explained to you why you need to have a very low fat diet, and the health problems you are likely to experience if you consume too much fat.

Understanding information on food labels

Fat free means the product contains no more than 0.5g of fat per 100g of the product. These products are very useful if you have been advised to follow a very low fat diet because of your medical condition.

Low fat means the product contains no more than 3g of fat per normal serving. The label should tell you what a 'normal' serving is. You may be able to include small amounts of these products in a very low fat diet

Reduced fat means the product contains at least 30% less fat than equivalent foods. It may still be high in fat. Be particularly cautious with these products if you are following a very low fat diet. Look at the label to see how much fat is in your portion.

It is very important to reduce all fats, not just change to 'healthy' fats.

Your daily fat allowance is:

Practical tips for very low fat choices

1. Most fruits and vegetables (apart from olives and avocados) are very low in fat. Base your meals on these.
2. Use skimmed milk. Full fat or semi-skimmed milk will use up quite a lot of your daily fat allowance. Avoid all hard cheeses, even those which say 'reduced fat'. Choose fat-free yogurt and fat-free cottage cheese instead of the full fat or reduced fat versions.
3. Avoid all cooking fats and oils apart from the one calorie spray oils. Even the healthier types contain too much fat for a very low fat diet. When making a curry or stew, try cooking the onions and spices in a little water instead of oil. Try balsamic vinegar, lemon juice or flavoured vinegar instead of oily salad dressing
4. Avoid all butter and margarine. Even the reduced fat types will use up a substantial part of your fat allowance. To moisten a sandwich try using salad leaves, tomatoes, cucumber, ketchup or chutney (not mayonnaise) instead. Try jam or marmalade on your toast instead of butter or margarine.
5. Protein is an essential part of a healthy diet. Many protein foods, for example meat, eggs and Quorn, contain fat. By reducing or avoiding fat in other foods, you will be able to include some of these protein foods in your very low fat diet. Fat-free yogurt, fat-free cottage cheese, baked beans, lentils and kidney beans are very low in fat and are good protein sources.

1. Some sugary foods, for example jam, honey and jelly sweets, contain no fat. However they may be high in calories (kcal). You may need to limit these if you are trying to lose weight or if you have diabetes.
2. Many processed foods and ready-prepared foods contain 'hidden' fat which may not be obvious at first glance. Check the nutrition label for fat content.
3. Coffee shop drinks may contain up to 15g fat per serving. If you wish to have these products, check the fat content on their nutrition information websites.
4. Avoid fish oil supplements, for example cod liver oil, omega 3 supplements or Omacor. If your GP has prescribed one of these supplements for you discuss it with your specialist care team.
5. You may find it helpful to keep a food diary and record your fat intake as you go along. This will help ensure you do not exceed your fat allowance.

The following pages give the fat content of some common foods and drinks.

Vegetables & salad

	Portion size	Fat content
Asparagus, aubergine, beetroot, broad beans, broccoli, green beans, butternut squash, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, courgette, cucumber, leeks, lettuce, mushrooms, onions, potatoes, peas, peppers, plantain, radishes, salad leaves, spinach, sweet potato, sweetcorn, tomatoes, turnip, yam	2 tablespoons (approx. 80g)	Less than 1g
Okra, parsnip, sprouts	2 tablespoons (approx. 80g)	1g
Oven chips	125g	5g

Fruit

	Portion size	Fat content
Apples, apricots, bananas, blackberries, cherries, dates, grapefruit, grapes, kiwi, mangoes, melon, oranges, peaches, pears, pineapple, plums, raisins, raspberries, strawberries	1 handful (approx. 80g)	Less than 1g
Fruit juice	200mls (1/3 pint)	Less than 1g
Olives	2 olives	1g
Avocado	1 avocado	20g

Dairy

	Portion size	Fat content
Skimmed milk	200mls (1/3 pint)	Less than 1g
Semi-skimmed milk	200mls (1/3 pint)	3g
Whole milk	200mls (1/3 pint)	8g
Soya milk	200mls (1/3 pint)	4g
Virtually fat free cottage cheese	100g	Less than 1g
Cottage cheese	100g	4g
Reduced fat Cheddar cheese	30g (matchbox size)	5g
Edam cheese	30g (matchbox size)	8g
Cheddar cheese	30g (matchbox size)	11g
Fat-free yogurt	Individual pot	Less than 1g
Low fat yogurt	Individual pot	3g
Greek style yogurt	Individual pot (100g)	10g

Fats and oils

	Portion size	Fat content
1 calorie spray oil	1 spray	0.1g
Reduced fat spread	1 level teaspoon	2g
Margarine	1 level teaspoon	3g
Butter	1 level teaspoon	4g
Olive, sunflower and vegetable oil	1 tablespoon	15g

It is very important to reduce all fats, not just change to 'healthy' fats

Bread, cereal, pasta and rice

	Portion size	Fat content
Chapatti	1 chapatti	Less than 1g
White or wholemeal bread	1 medium slice	1g
Bagel	1 bagel (50g)	2g
Croissant	1 medium (50g)	10g
Cornflakes	40g	Less than 1g
Fruit and fibre	40g	2g
Muesli	60g	4g
Pasta, cooked	½ plate (150g)	1g
Rice, boiled	½ plate (150g)	2g

Tip: avoid cereals and breads which contain nuts or seeds as they are high in fat. Some seeded breads contain up to 5g fat per slice - check the label.

Meat, fish, eggs and Quorn

	Portion size	Fat content
Egg	1 egg	6g
Quorn	100g	3g
Chicken (no skin)	1 chicken breast	2g
Beef, lean roast	Small slice (40g)	5g
Lamb, lean roast	Small slice (40g)	6g
Pork chop, lean roast	75g	8g
Sausage, thick	1	12g
Tuna tinned in brine	½ can	Less than 1g
Prawns	100g	1g
White fish, baked	125g	2g
Smoked salmon	100g	5g
Chip shop fish	1 fish	51g

Pulses

	Portion size	Fat content
Baked beans	½ can	Less than 1g
Cooked lentils	½ can	Less than 1g
Kidney beans	½ can	Less than 1g
Chick peas	½ can	3g
Hummus, reduced fat	¼ tub (50g)	8g

Tip: pulses are a good source of protein. Baked beans, lentils and kidney beans are very low in fat.

Sweets and sugary foods

	Portion size	Fat content
Jam, marmalade, honey, sugar	1 teaspoon	0g
Jelly babies	50g	0g
Jelly	1 serving	0g
Malt loaf	Small slice (30g)	1g
Rich tea biscuit	1 biscuit	1g
Digestive biscuit	1 biscuit	3g
Swiss roll	Small slice (35g)	7g
Scone	1 medium (65g)	6g
Jam doughnut	1 doughnut	10g
Ice cream	1 scoop	4g
Chocolate	100g	32g

Tip: avoid chocolate spread as it is high in fat. Many ice lollies are virtually fat-free, check the label.

Savoury snacks

	Portion size	Fat content
Breadstick	1	Less than 1g
Cream cracker	1	1g
Plain rice cake	1	Less than 1g
Crispbread (not seeded)	1	Less than 1g
Crisps	1 small bag (25g)	8g
Walnuts	50g	39g
Peanuts, cashews	50g	25g

Tip: avoid peanut butter, nuts and seeds as they are high in fat. Some flavoured rice cakes contain fat, check the label.

Miscellaneous

	Portion size	Fat content
Chutney, ketchup, pickle	1 teaspoon	Less than 1g
Mayonnaise	1 tablespoon	11g
Pizza, frozen	½ average pizza	20g
Pizza, takeaway, large Margherita with thin base	1 slice	6g
Stock cube	1 cube	3g
Yeast extract	1 teaspoon	0g
Yorkshire pudding	1 small	2g

Tip: use yeast extract thickened with cornflour to make gravy.

Further information

Several restaurant and fast food chains publish nutritional information about their foods online. Fat counters are on sale in bookshops and online, and useful apps are available. Some calorie counting books include information on fat content too. For example:

- **Carbs & Cals by Chris Cheyette and Yello Balolia (older editions may not include information on fat content)**
- **Collins Gem Calorie Counter**

Very low fat meal ideas

Breakfasts:

- Cornflakes or bran flakes with skimmed milk
- Fat-free yogurt and fresh fruit
- Toast with jam or marmalade (no butter or margarine)

Lunches and dinners:

- Jacket potato with salad and beans or virtually fat-free cottage cheese or tuna (tinned in brine)
- Sandwich filled with salad and virtually fat-free cottage cheese or lean chicken or tuna (tinned in brine), no butter or margarine
- Beans on toast (no butter or margarine)
- Baked or grilled white fish with boiled or jacket potatoes and boiled or steamed vegetables
- Quorn fillet with salad and bread or potatoes (no butter or margarine)

Snacks:

- Breadsticks
- Fruit
- Fat-free yogurt
- Jelly sweets
- Ice lollies
- Plain rice cakes spread with jam or yeast extract
- Salad or raw vegetables

My fat counter

Food/drink	My portion	Fat in my portion

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