



“Oil” in Healthful Diet

Modern urbanites are generally health conscious and prefer diets with less oil when eating out or cooking. Oil comes in a great variety so how should we decide on which to choose and how much to consume? In fact, we should choose those rich in unsaturated fat but avoid those high in saturated and trans fat.

Analysis of Oil

Per 100g	Saturated Fat (g)	Trans Fat (g)	Unsaturated Fat (g)
Relatively Healthy Oil			
Olive Oil	13.8	NA	83.5
Canola Oil	7.4	0.40	91.4
Soybean Oil	15.1	0.67	80.3
Corn Oil	12.9	NA	82.3
Peanut Oil	16.9	NA	78.2
Relatively Unhealthy Oil			
Butter	51.4	3.28	24.0
Lard	39.2	NA	56.3
Coconut Oil	86.5	NA	7.6
Palm Oil	49.3	NA	46.3
Margarine (80% fat, tub)	14.2	5.83	63.1
Vegetable Shortening	25.0	13.16	69.3

NA – Not available

Data Source: The Nutrient Data Laboratory, U.S. Department of Agriculture



Relatively Healthy Cooking Oil

Oil such as olive oil, canola oil, soybean oil, corn oil and peanut oil contains lots of unsaturated fat (about 80%), which will decrease bad cholesterol in the blood and hence preventing cardiovascular diseases, e.g. stroke and heart diseases. Nevertheless, both kinds of oil provide 9 kcal energy per gram. So when we choose to cook with the relatively healthy oil, we should still adopt low-fat cooking methods, such as steaming, boiling, blanching, baking and stir-frying with small amount of oil to reduce fat intake. As to the portion, it is recommended that each person should use no more than 2 teaspoons of cooking oil for preparing food per meal.

Relatively Unhealthy Cooking Oil

Butter, lard, coconut oil and palm oil contain quite a lot of saturated fat. Saturated fat will increase the level of bad cholesterol in the blood, hence a higher probability of cardiovascular diseases. Besides containing certain amount of unsaturated fat, margarine and vegetable shortening also contain lots of trans fat. Eating too much of such will not only increase the level of bad

cholesterol in the blood but also decrease that of good cholesterol in the blood.

Therefore, we should consume as little as possible.

More about Margarine

Nowadays, some new types of margarine formulated with relatively healthier oil have become available in the market. This kind of products is lower in saturated fat and trans fats. Consumers are advised to read nutrition labels in order to select products containing both less saturated fat and trans fat.

If you want to learn more about...

- ✧ the information on healthful diets, please visit the website of “Health Zone” at <http://www.cheu.gov.hk>
- ✧ the information on “Health@work.hk Project”, please visit <http://www.healthatwork.gov.hk>