

Dear Health Care Professional,

While dietary recommendations on the quality of fat in the diet are consistent among leading health authorities, people are generally not aware of the importance of fat as part of a healthy diet or that certain fats — the omega-6 polyunsaturated fats (PUFAs) — can be heart-healthy. To learn more about the recently published American Heart Association Science Advisory that reviews the evidence on the relationship between omega-6 PUFAs and the risk of cardiovascular disease, read on.

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Sincerely,



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The Role of Omega-6 PUFA in Heart Health Revealed

While leading health authorities are consistent in their recommendations on the quality of fat in the diet for optimal health, many consumers don't know that fat is part of a healthy diet, or that some fats — specifically omega-6 polyunsaturated fats (PUFAs) — can provide heart-health benefits. The American Heart Association (AHA) Subcommittee of the Council on Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Metabolism recently published a Science Advisory to review the evidence about the relationship between omega-6 and maintenance of heart health, as well as omega-6 dietary intake recommendations.¹

Omega-6 PUFAs and Heart Health: Key Findings

A thorough assessment of the literature revealed that omega-6 PUFAs play a role in maintaining heart health as part of a diet low in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol. To summarize some of the key findings:

- When substituted for carbohydrates, PUFAs improved the ratio of total to high density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol more than any other class of fatty acids.
- A reduction in low density lipoproteins (LDL) cholesterol was shown when saturated fat (SAFA) was replaced by omega-6 PUFA.
- A meta-analysis revealed that replacing saturated fat with PUFA (at 11% to 21% of total calories) lowered the risk of coronary heart disease.

Recommendations for Omega-6 PUFAs in the Diet

The AHA Science Advisory concluded that at least 5-10% of total energy intake (about 12 to 22 grams/day) should be from omega-6 PUFA to help maintain heart health. The position of the American

Dietetic Association and Dietitians of Canada recommends 3%-10% of total calories from omega-6 PUFA and 0.6%-1.2% from omega-3 PUFA ALA.² The National Cholesterol Education Program Adult Treatment Panel III recommends that PUFA intake should range up to 10% of total calories.³ These are consistent science-based recommendations with the goal of improving the fat quality of the diet by advising that consumers include sources of beneficial Omega 6 fats in their diet, while reducing the intake of saturated and trans fats. Also, when substituting omega-6 PUFA for saturated fat in the diet, calorie intake should not increase. ([Click here](#) to link to the Dietary Fats chart in our Winter '08 Heart Headlines e-brief).

Serving up Omega-6 PUFAs for your Clients

Here are some tips to help consumers achieve an adequate intake of Omega-6 PUFAs in their diets:

- **Switch to soft spreads.** Soft spreads are made with nutritious vegetable oils including soybean and canola that provide an important source of essential PUFAs, as compared with butter, which provides 7 g of saturated fat per serving. For example, Promise® Buttery Spread provides an excellent source of omega-3 ALA (550 mg/serving) and 3300 mg of omega-6 LA per serving, with 1.5 g of saturated fat and no trans fat per serving. Need a recipe? [Click here](#) to find your next meal.
- **Choose nutritious vegetable oils.** Oils like soybean, corn, safflower and sunflower are rich in PUFAs.
- **Add a healthy topping.** Try topping a salad, cereal or low-fat yogurt or dessert with walnuts, pecans, almonds or seeds like sesame and pumpkin, which are important sources of PUFAs
- **Smooth on some peanut butter.** Peanut butter is a tasty snack that is packed with PUFAs. For example, one serving (2 Tbsp.) of Skippy® Creamy peanut butter provides 4.4 g of PUFAs. Spread it on apple slices, celery sticks or smooth it on 1/2 banana cut lengthwise and sprinkle with raisins. Skippy contains 3 g saturated fat and 0 g trans fat per serving.

References

1. Harris W, Mozaffarian D, Rimm E, et al. Omega-6 Fatty Acids and Risk for Cardiovascular Disease. A Science Advisory from the American Heart Association, Nutrition Subcommittee of the Council on Nutrition, Physical Activity and Metabolism; Council on Cardiovascular Nursing; and Council on Epidemiology and Prevention. *Circulation*. 2009;119:902-907.
2. Position of American Dietetic Association and Dietitians of Canada: Dietary Fatty Acids. *J Am Diet Assoc*. 2007;107:1599-1611.
3. The Third Report of the National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP) Expert Panel on Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Cholesterol in Adults (Adult Treatment Panel III) Final Report. *NIH Publication No. 02-5215* September 2002.
Available at: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/cholesterol/atp3full.pdf>



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