

Know the Fat in Your Oil

By Prof. Dr. Rashida Ali

In Ramazan, many of the special dishes prepared at *sehri* and *iftar* are deep-fried. Therefore, since fat consumption is much more than usual, care must be taken in selecting the right type of fat so that the volume of fat can be controlled.

Fat is an integral part of your diet. The normal energy requirement of an adult is about 2,000 kcal per day, of

which 30% should be provided by fat. This means that 600 kcal of fat are the recommended daily allowances (RDA) and as one gram of fat equal 9 kcal, a person should consume about 66 grams of fat a day.

Fat is required by the body as a ready source of reserve energy. It supplies essential fatty acids, carries fat soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K in the bloodstream for distribution,

regulates the body's temperature and protects it from external damage, acting like a cushion underneath the skin.

However, it is very important to know nutritional facts about the types of fat, especially the cooking oils commonly consumed

Fatty acids are a major portion of oil/fat and broadly divide in three types i.e. saturated (SFA), poly unsaturated (PUFA)

and mono unsaturated fatty (MUFA) acids.

Each group plays a role in your health.

1 Saturated fatty acids hinder cholesterol metabolism and increase blood LDL cholesterol (low density lipo proteins), VLDL (very low density

lipo protein), and triglyceriudes in the blood: all of which constitute the basic cause of cardio vascular diseases, diabetes and strokes. SFA should not comprise more than 10% of the total fat you consume.

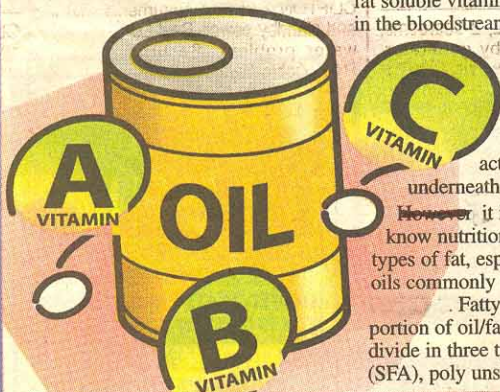
2 Polyunsaturated are a better group as they do not deposit in the arteries.

3 Mono unsaturated fatty acids are regarded as the best; research has shown that MUFA lowers serum cholesterol levels, controls sugar and promotes insulin function.

Oil/fat is not just measured by the amount of saturated, polyunsaturated and mono unsaturated fatty acids it contains. There is another fatty acid to consider: Omega fatty acids, which are unsaturated and differ in chemical structure. Omega 3, Omega 6 and Omega 9 fatty acids are very good for health, as they help prevent chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes and heart attack

They are mostly found in fish oil, but are also present in seeds and nuts. Some of these fatty acids are essential to health and must be supplied in the form of dietary fat. These fatty acids lower cholesterol, LDL, VLDL, and blood pressure and help in rheumatoid arthritis, diabetic neuropathy, menstrual discomfort, eczema and depression. ■

The writer is a Consultant at H. E. J. Research Institute of Chemistry, University of Karachi.



Percentage of fatty acid distribution in various oils

Item	Omega-3	Omega-6	Omega-9
Corn Oil	-	59	17
Coconut	-	2	92
Flax Oil	57	18	9
Olive Oil	-	8	10
Safflower	-	79	8
Sesame	-	41	13
Sunflower	-	69	13
Walnut	8	51	16

Nutritional FACTS

Percentage of fatty acids present in various oils/fat

Type of oil/fat PUFA MUFA SFA

PUFA rich

Corn oil	62	25	13
Cottonseed	54	19	27
Safflower	78	13	9
Soya bean	61	24	15
Sunflower	69	20	11

MUFA rich

Canola	31	62	7
Margarine (hard)	29	35-66	17-25
Margarine (soft)	61	14-36	10-17
Olive oil	9	77	14
Peanut	34	48	18
Sesame seed	44	41	15
Vegetable	33	44-45	22-23

SFA rich

Beef fat	4	44	52
Butter	4	30	66
Coconut oil	2	6	92
Palm oil	10	39	51

GARLIC BREAD

You need:

- About half a dozen slices of hard bread
- One dozen cloves of garlic
- Salt and pepper to taste
- One ounce of olive oil

Directions

- 1 Toast the bread over an open grill.
- 2 Rub the toasted slices with the fresh garlic - the toast will act as a grater.
- 3 Season with salt and pepper.
- 4 Drizzle olive oil liberally over the bread and serve.