



# THE BRITISH DIETETIC ASSOCIATION

*The Professional Association for Registered Dietitians*

5th Floor, Charles House, 148/9 Great Charles Street Queensway, Birmingham B3 3HT

Tel: 0121 200 8080 Fax: 0121 200 8081



---

# Media Release

---

9 October 2007

For immediate release

## **Fats: the good, the bad and the ugly**

Despite recent high-level awareness campaigns aimed at cutting fats from the nation's diets, especially trans (ugly) fats, greater emphasis should be made to reduce saturated (bad) fat intake. This will help heart disease rates continue to fall, according to Rachel Vine, a Leeds-based community dietitian.

Speaking at Primary Care Live, the British Dietetic Association member told the assembled audience including GPs, nurses, pharmacists and health visitors that the level of saturated fat intake was still above the recommended amount. Primary Care Live conference and exhibition, at ExCeL London, is targeted at healthcare professionals to help keep them up to date.

Heart and circulatory disease remains the UK's biggest killer. The Department of Health report that the 2010 target to reduce this cause of death by 40% is on track, but this is not consistent across the UK, due to health inequalities. Heart disease is the most common cause of premature death in the UK, causing over 100,000 deaths a year – this compares to around 33,000 deaths from lung cancer which is the next biggest killer.

Diet is one of the nine modifiable risk factors that accounts for 90% of heart attacks worldwide. The type and amount of fat we eat is a key aspect of a healthier diet to prevent heart disease. The National Diet and Nutrition Survey shows that we are eating less saturated fat, but the level is still too high. Currently, the nation's intake of saturated fat stands at 13.3% of total food energy against a recommended total intake of 10% and has been linked with an increased risk of heart disease.

Saturated fat usually comes from animal sources and is found in things like lard, butter, hard margarine, cheese, whole milk and anything that contains these ingredients, such as chocolate and pies. It is also the white fat found on red meat or underneath poultry skin; and at room temperature becomes solid.

**m/f**

Trans fats are artificially created through a chemical process of the hydrogenation of oils and are typically found in margarines, cakes, pastries, biscuits, processed foods and deep fat fried fast food. In recent years, trans fats have risen to the top of the food and health agenda as a number of studies have linked trans fats to

heart disease. Subsequently, food manufacturers, governments and consumers are increasingly concerned about trans fats, as they do more harm than good.

However, most people eat a lot more saturated fat than trans fats. The National Diet and Nutrition Survey shows that the nation is already eating less 'ugly' fat. Most people in the UK don't eat large amounts of trans fats; their intake now is about half (1.2%) the recommended maximum (2.0% of total food energy).

According to Rachel Vine, by cutting down on bad fats we will automatically further cut down on the ugly fats. Some fat can be replaced by the good fats, such as omega-3 fats, which can help to reduce the risk of heart disease. Everyone should try to eat two servings of fish a week, one of which should be an oily fish (rich in omega-3 fats).

She said: "Whilst food companies have introduced voluntary labelling of trans fats and supermarkets have reduced or withdrawn products containing hydrogenated fats, we have taken our foot off the pedal when it comes to saturated fats. The intake of saturated fats remains unacceptably high and health professionals, the food industry and retailers must re-double efforts. If heart disease rates are to continue to fall, we need to ensure healthier choices are easier choices."

"Although it's a well worn message, following the simple rules of eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day, having two servings of fish a week and cutting back on fried foods, butter, margarine or fatty foods can all help the nation fight heart disease as part of a healthy lifestyle."

- Ends -

**Media enquiries to The British Dietetic Association should be directed to our media hotline on 0870 580 2517 or [pr@bda.uk.com](mailto:pr@bda.uk.com).**

**Notes to Editors**

1. The British Dietetic Association, founded in 1936, is the professional association for registered dietitians in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It is the nation's largest organisation of food and nutrition professionals with over 6,000 members. About two-thirds of members are employed in the National Health Service. The remaining members work in education, industry, research, sport settings or freelance.
2. Registered dietitians hold the only legally-recognised graduate qualifications in nutrition and dietetics. They are experts in interpreting and translating the science of nutrition into practical ways of promoting nutritional well-being, disease treatment and the prevention of nutrition-related problems. Their advice is sound and based on current scientific evidence.
3. Registration, awarded by the Health Professions Council, is an indication that a Dietitian is fit to practise and is working within an agreed statement of conduct. For further details about The British Dietetic Association, please visit our websites: [www.bda.uk.com](http://www.bda.uk.com), [www.bdaweightwise.com](http://www.bdaweightwise.com), [www.teenweightwise.com](http://www.teenweightwise.com).