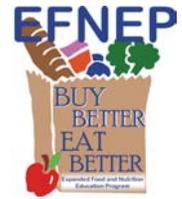




Family Nutrition In Action

August 2004, Vol. 8, No. 6



This newsletter is supported with funding from the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education program, USDA's Food Stamp Program, Florida Department of Children and Families, and University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service, in collaboration with state, county, and local agencies. The Food Stamp Program gives nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-800-342-9274 (toll-free).



Fats for Food Preparation

It used to be a lot simpler. We prepared and flavored our food with fat. Now, however, there is so much information on the different types of fat that it is more and more difficult to decide what to use. On the one hand there is butter, on the other hand there are oils, and on yet another hand there are margarines and the issue of *trans* fats. Each type of fat has unique characteristics and each type of fat has distinct health effects.

Butter is a *saturated* fat. Most of the saturated fat we consume is animal fat: beef fat, chicken fat, milk fat. You can usually recognize a saturated fat because it is solid at room temperature. Tropical oils such as coconut and palm kernel oils are the exception to this rule; tropical oils are also saturated. Butter is often used as a spread and in baking because it provides a rich creamy flavor and permits the baker to create a flaky/crispy product with a golden-brown color. But butter and other saturated fats can

increase blood cholesterol, which increases risk for heart disease.

Oils are typically *polyunsaturated* or *monounsaturated* fats. You can usually recognize these types of fats because they tend to be liquid – although *monounsaturated* fats may solidify in cold temperatures. These fats tend to be made from plants such as corn, soybean, safflower, canola, olive, and peanuts. Typically, oils are used for frying or sautéing because they can be heated to high temperatures without burning.



Oils are also used for marinades and dressings because they can be poured. Polyunsaturated and monounsaturated oils may help lower blood cholesterol and help to maintain a healthy heart.

Margarine can be thought of as a cross between butter and oil.

Margarine is basically a vegetable oil that has been *hydrogenated* - a process that converts the oil from a liquid to a solid and changes its function. The more an oil is hydrogenated, the more solid the product. Stick margarines are good for baking. Tub or squeeze margarines are less *hydrogenated*, they spread easily to coat breads and cooking pans.

Recently, hydrogenated fats such as margarines (and vegetable shortenings) have been found to introduce a new health risk: *trans fats*. Trans fats are produced during the hydrogenation process. Trans fats, like saturated fats, increase blood cholesterol and risk to heart disease.

Fats are an important part of baking/cooking and food preparation. The challenge is to keep saturated and trans fats to a minimum while selecting the most appropriate and most healthful fats for the task at hand.

...A Few Recommendations:

- For baking, substitute approximately half the solid fat with vegetable oil or use commercially available blends of solid/liquid fats.
- For spreads, select soft margarines – the term “liquid vegetable oil” should appear first on the product’s ingredient list.
- Sauté foods in unsaturated oil - canola or olive is a good choice.
- Make dressings, gravies, and marinades with unsaturated oils rather than meat drippings.
- In addition to canola and olive oils, safflower, sunflower, corn, and soybean oils are good choices.

Butterscotch Brownies

American Heart Association Cookbook,
4th edition

1/4 cup oil
1 cup light brown sugar, firmly packed
1 egg, slightly beaten (or 2 egg whites or egg substitute equivalent to 1 egg)
3/4 cup sifted flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 cup coarsely chopped walnuts
(walnuts are high in polyunsaturated fats)

Blend oil and sugar. Stir in beaten egg. Sift flour and baking powder together and combine with egg mixture. Add vanilla and walnuts to the batter, spread in an oiled 8 x 8 x 2 inch pan and bake at 350° F. for 25 minutes. Do not over bake. Cool slightly, and cut into squares.

Yield: 32 squares
Approx cal/serving: 65



For additional information, contact your local County Extension Office:



The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Employment Opportunity _ Affirmative Action Employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, IFAS, Florida A. & M. UNIVERSITY COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAM, AND BOARDS OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COOPERATING.