

Time to get to the heart of if fat is bad for heart health? It depends on your heart.

For years the public health message has been anti-fat. Fat is bad for your heart, fat causes heart disease, and fat (especially saturated fat) is the enemy and should be eliminated from the diet for health. However, not all fats are the same, and health, nutrition and medicine are personalised to an individual and their body and biology. Therefore, medicine and dietary nutrition should be prescribed accordingly, after testing your biochemical markers (the levels of key macro and micro chemicals, vitamins and minerals) in your body, to ensure you optimise for health. This can make sure that all changes are evidence-based and do not change your diet or add dietary supplements unnecessarily and damage your body. Testing removes the guessing game.

What is dietary fat and is it all bad for your heart?

There are many different types of fat. All are essential. Our brain is 60% fat. Saturated fats (which are straight chains that contain single carbon bonds in their biochemistry) are a quick source of dietary energy and are stored in the liver and adipose (fat) cells and are needed for body insulation, warmth, brain health and cell membranes. They also help absorb key fat-soluble vitamins such as vitamin A (an antioxidant needed for reducing inflammation and for eye health), vitamin D (a vitamin needed for bones, teeth and our immune defence against disease system), vitamin E (another antioxidant) and vitamin K (needed for bone health, blood clotting and wound healing).

Saturated fats, like trans fats, increase the level of LDLs (low-density lipoprotein) in the body, which take cholesterol from the liver to the body tissues (such as the blood vessels) which can cause a build-up of fatty deposits in the blood vessels (called atherosclerosis) and heart disease and heart attacks. Too little saturated fats and too much is bad for health. Our main source is from meat, dairy such as butter and oil fats and therefore there is much-saturated fat in foods containing lots of these such as highly palatable cakes, chocolates, pizzas and crisps and processed foods. Testing for cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, Cholesterol: HDL ratio, and Triglycerides, (TGAs), can help you determine how much dietary saturated fats you should be indulging on. Other sources of dietary fat include unsaturated fats. These contain a double bond in their biochemistry. These can be mono (one double bond) or poly (more than one) double bonded. Monounsaturated fats include omega-9 fats which are in olives, olive oil, peanuts, avocados and rapeseed oils. These decrease LDL cholesterol and have anti-inflammatory properties. Then there are polyunsaturated fats such as Omega3s and Omega6s.



These are essential fatty acids as we can only get them from the diet, and they are essential for brain and body health. Omega-3 fatty acids are found in oily fish, walnuts, linseeds and soybeans, dark green vegetables and products fortified with omega-3s. Omega-6s are found in vegetable oils, lean meats, eggs and soya beans. They are both great sources of energy and have anti-inflammatory properties.

Omega fatty acids also help increase HDL (high-density lipoprotein) levels and reduce triglyceride (TGA), the fat in your blood, levels. This can help those at high risk of heart disease and heart attacks to prevent disease, reduce dietary weight and may help to alleviate depression and anxiety. They can also help to improve inflammatory conditions such as arthritis which can immobilise individuals and worsen physical and mental health. For some people, those with anxiety and depression, conditions of the joint, overweight, with diabetes and heart conditions, omega fatty acids can improve health and life span. However, for those underweight, with low saturated fat levels, too much omega fatty acids can reduce body fat, reduce sterol hormones Oestrogen, Progesterone and Testosterone and damage their health. Testing for Cholesterol, High-density lipoprotein, Low-density lipoprotein, Non-HDL Cholesterol, Cholesterol: HDL ratio, Triglycerides level, and for Haemoglobin A1c, can ensure that you tailor your dietary fat intake to your personal body needs and requirements. It can ensure that you do not consume inadequate or surplus saturated or unsaturated fats in your diet or supplementation, helping prevent disease.

How can NPH Group help?

Want to improve your general health based on your own personal biochemical evidence and ensure you reach your optimum health capacity?

For more information, please get in touch info@nph-group.co.uk.