MyPyramid.gov
STEPS TO A HEALTHIER YOU

Fact Sheet

Limit Saturated Fat & Cholesterol *for Healthier School Meals*

KEY ISSUES:

- **Most Americans need to decrease their dietary intakes of saturated fat. Many Americans also need to decrease their intake of cholesterol to reduce the risk of heart disease.**
- **The *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend we eat less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat and less than 300 mg of cholesterol per day.**
- **When averaged over a week, school meals must provide less than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat (no more than 6-8 grams at lunch).**
- **Aim for less than 100 mg of cholesterol at lunch and less than 75 mg at breakfast on average over a week.**
- **Schools can meet these recommendations by serving lean meats, encouraging more fruits, vegetables, dry beans, and whole grains, and serving only fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk.**

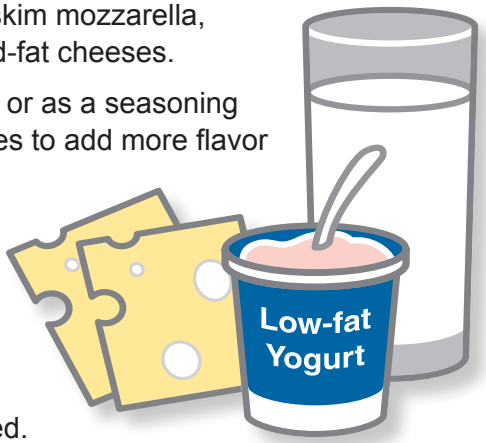
When it comes to heart health, the type and amount of fat we eat makes a big difference. Many Americans eat too much saturated fat and cholesterol, which increase unhealthy blood lipids (low-density lipoproteins, or "LDL cholesterol"). Most of the saturated fat in our diet comes from cheese and other higher fat dairy products, beef, and baked goods like cakes, cookies, and doughnuts. Foods higher in saturated fat usually contain more cholesterol, too.

Look for the amount of "saturated fat", "*trans* fat," and "cholesterol" per serving listed on the Nutrition Facts label. Choose foods that have the least amount of all three. A manufacturer can claim a food as "low-cholesterol" if the product contains 20 mg of cholesterol or less and 2 g or less of saturated fat per serving.

Easy ways to follow the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*

Recipe for Success

- **Offer fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk and yogurt.** They're rich in protein, calcium, and other nutrients and lower in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- **Try low-fat cottage cheese**, part-skim mozzarella, ricotta, and other low-fat or reduced-fat cheeses.
- **Omit butter and cream in sauces** or as a seasoning for vegetables. Try herbs and spices to add more flavor without the fat.
- **Choose lean cuts of meats** with minimal visible fat. Trim all outside fat before cooking and remove the skin on poultry.
- **Prepare fish baked, broiled, or grilled** rather than breaded and fried.



USDA Commodity Food Program

USDA has reduced or eliminated saturated fat and cholesterol in commodities offered to schools. Shortening and butter are no longer available. Processors now use lean meat in place of skin and fat in processed poultry products. Schools can order lean meats and poultry items, part-skim mozzarella cheese, and other reduced-fat cheeses through the commodity program. Check the list of available foods at: www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/schcnp/.

- **Avoid using too many processed meats** including sausage, bologna, salami, and hot dogs — even those with "reduced fat" labels — they may still be high in calories, saturated fat, and cholesterol. Serve grilled, skinless chicken breast instead.
- **Limit certain bakery products** like doughnuts, pies, cakes, cookies, and crackers, which may contain saturated fat and *trans* fat.

Messages for Students

- Want a crunchy addition to your salad? Try a small scoop of nuts. Nuts provide mostly unsaturated fats and are high in protein, leaving you feeling satisfied.
- Grab a handful of nuts and fruit for a smart snack.
- Did you eat pizza yesterday? Try something different today!

For more information:

www.MyPyramid.gov

Did You Know?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance that the body needs to function normally. Our bodies make enough cholesterol, so there is no required amount we should eat each day. When you have too much cholesterol—because of diet, how well your body is able to process it, or your genetic history—it can build up in arteries and restrict blood flow to the heart and brain.

Two major types of cholesterol in the blood are:

Low-Density Lipoprotein (LDL) - It is normal to have some of this type of cholesterol, but when too much LDL cholesterol circulates in the blood, it can slowly clog the arteries supplying blood to the heart and brain. This increases your risk for a heart attack.

High-Density Lipoprotein (HDL) - The "good" form of cholesterol helps to keep the arteries clear. Some studies suggest that high levels of HDL cholesterol can reduce your risk of heart attack and stroke.

Liver, other organ meats, egg yolks, and dairy fats contain higher levels of cholesterol. Plant foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and nuts contain no dietary cholesterol.

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