

FAT RESTRICTION AND HEALTH

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In countries where the prevalence of obesity is high, a reduction in total fat intake is desirable because fat is the most energy dense of all nutrients. Providing sufficient essential fatty acids and fat-soluble vitamins are supplied, substantial reductions in total fat can be achieved without decreasing the intake of other essential nutrients. High fat intakes besides being related to obesity, are linked to hyperlipidaemia, atherosclerosis, coronary heart disease, gallstones and colon cancer. Fat also provides palatability to the diet. Whilst changes in dietary fat composition can be made by exchanging different types of visible fats, a high proportion of fat in the diet is hidden in foods and much of this is of the saturated type. The challenge to the food industry is to produce alternative foods that contain less total (particularly saturated) fat but are still palatable and acceptable to the consumer.

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Fat + obesity

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