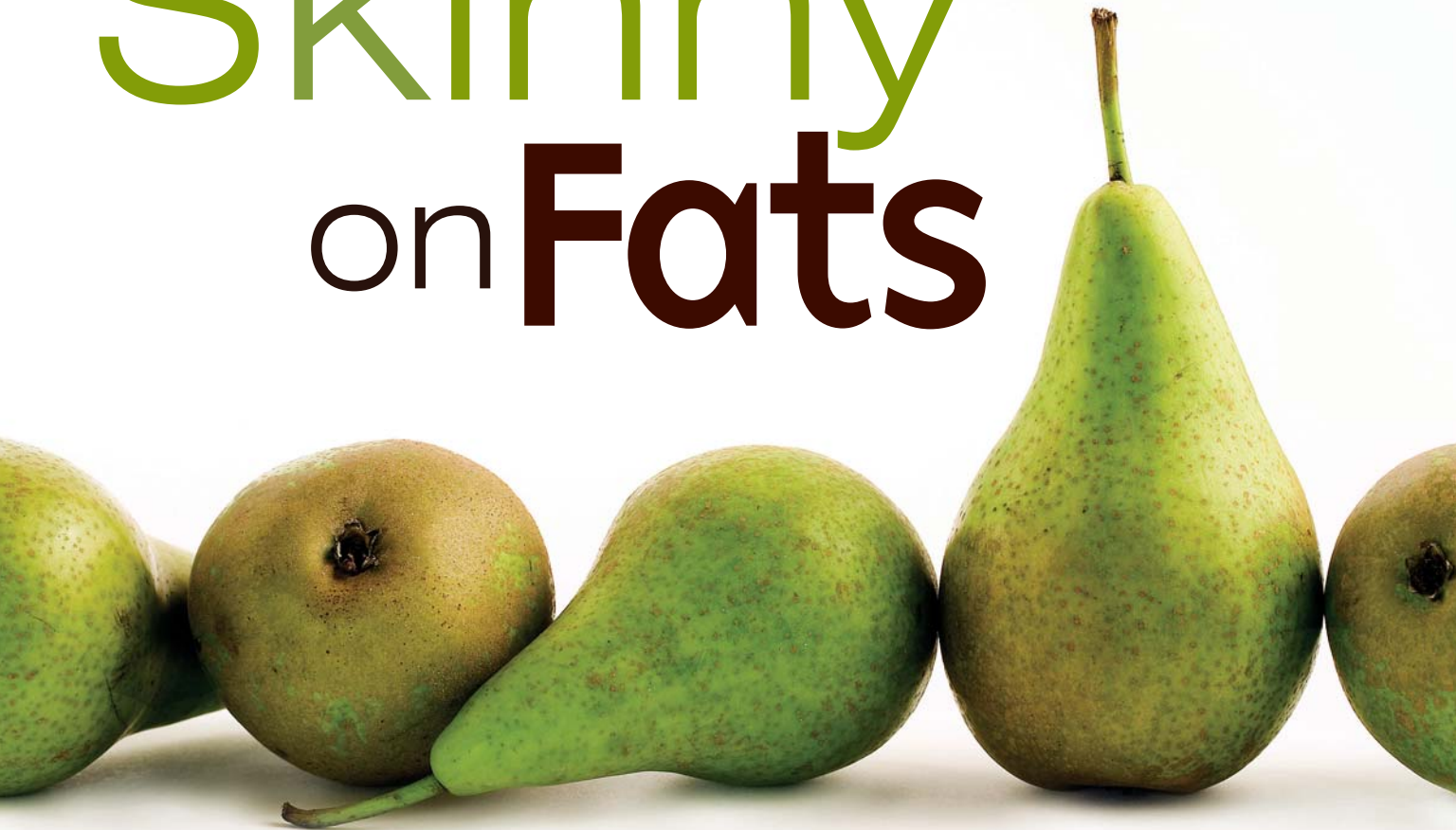


The Skinny on Fats



Saturated fat. Unsaturated fat. Trans fat. Although we've all heard that limiting fat intake has health benefits, many of us don't know that the type of fat we eat can make all the difference. While some fats are best avoided, others can actually improve heart health and lower the risk of disease and obesity.

Bad Fats: Learn the Limits

Of all the different fat types, trans fats have the least nutritional value. Found in most margarines, fried foods and prepared foods containing hydrogenated oils, trans fats raise LDL, or "bad" cholesterol, and lower HDL, or "good" cholesterol.

Cutting down on saturated fats is another smart dietary decision, as they raise both "good" and "bad" cholesterol levels and have an overall negative effect on heart health. Saturated fats are typically the animal fats found in red meat, whole-milk dairy products and egg yolks, though they also exist in coconut and palm oils.



Thanks to healthy eating trends, it's easier to find low-fat dairy products, such as milk, cheese and ice cream, that have reduced levels of saturated fat and offer the same nutritional value as whole-milk products. You can also opt for egg substitutes and leaner cuts of meat to boost the health benefits of traditional dishes and baked goods.

Good Fats: Be Heart Smart

Don't let fear of fat get in the way of a well-balanced diet. When preparing foods, you should know that there are polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats that can actually improve cholesterol and reduce the risks associated with heart disease.

So where can you find these good fats?

Polyunsaturated fats, also known as omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, are found in fatty fish like salmon and trout, as well as in walnuts, sunflower seeds, soy beans, and canola and flaxseed oils. Monounsaturated fats include olive, canola and peanut oils, as well as nuts, avocados and peanut butter. When regularly included in your recipes, good fats can actually improve overall health and potentially lower the risk for developing some cancers.



Palate-Pleasing Alternatives

The grocery store shouldn't be the only place consumers can find healthy foods—your establishment can also offer nutritious fare. More and more restaurateurs are capitalizing on these health trends by offering heart-smart meals to health-conscious consumers. You can replace chips with vegetables as side items; create kids' menus with fruit and low-fat milk instead of french fries and sodas; tempt the sweet tooth without undermining diets by offering miniature desserts; and use fresh, organic produce that is both popular with patrons and free of saturated and trans fats. SYSCO offers a variety of "good fat" products that you can start integrating into your recipes this season.

Even the smallest menu changes can make a big difference to your customers. Crunch cravings can be satisfied by topping salads and smoothies with nuts rich in monounsaturated fats, and adding a well-seasoned turkey burger to your menu can win over the beef-eating crowd. Cooking your favorite dishes in trans-fat-free oils will keep regulars happy while improving your food's nutritional value.

In your restaurant and in your home, fats play an important role in every meal. Once you can distinguish between the good and the bad, there's no reason to fear fats anymore!



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