

Nutrition

We have all heard the saying, you are what you eat, while this is true in some sense, it is also said, you feel as good as you eat. Food is fuel and it is an enjoyable source of entertainment. It can serve both functions well if used wisely.

There are three sources of energy in our foods: **Fats, Carbohydrates, and Proteins.**

- Higher levels of **fats** are found in a variety of sources. These include certain oils, butter, red meats, and in foods you might not expect, like peanuts.
- **Carbohydrates** are a fuel source most commonly found in foods like pasta, bread, and potatoes.
- **Proteins** are most commonly found in meats, but also found in peanuts and some bread.

Your body needs all of these fuel sources, but not in the same quantities. The latest nutritional information provided by the Institute of Medicine (2002), states that a balanced diet consists of 45% to 65% carbohydrate, 10% to 35% protein, and 20% to 35% fat. Unfortunately, for most Americans, the fat content is significantly higher than this.



Why reduce fat intake?

In terms of energy sources, fat is a valuable and concentrated fuel. There are twice as many calories per gram of fat than there are in protein or carbohydrates. If a person was on a deserted island and wanted to survive as long as possible with no food, having excess body fat would be of great benefit because they would have twice the fuel source available.

When you want to know how much fat is in your food, you can take the number of grams of fat listed on the label and multiply it by nine. This gives the number of fat calories. By dividing this number by the total number of calories per serving, you can find out what percentage of each serving is fat. It is surprising to find that even many low-fat items contain a very high percentage of fat.

$$\frac{\text{grams of fat}}{\text{grams of fat}} \times 9 = \frac{\text{fat calories}}{\text{fat calories}}$$
$$\frac{\text{fat calories}}{\text{fat calories}} \div \frac{\text{total number of calories per servings}}{\text{total number of calories per servings}} = \frac{\text{percentage serving of fat}}{\text{percentage serving of fat}}$$

NUTRITION

Talking Notes

POINTS TO REVIEW

1. **Your body needs fats, proteins, and carbohydrates for energy. Carbohydrates are the most useful and should be eaten in greater quantities.**

Keeping a balanced diet of fat, protein, and carbohydrates is difficult in this era of processed and fast foods. While our body needs three fuel sources, the easiest fuel for it to use are carbohydrates.

- **Fat** is important for lining our nerves and protecting vital organs.
- **Protein** helps in preserving and developing muscle.
- **Carbohydrates** provide the energy for our daily activities.

Although all are needed, carbohydrates are what we need in the greatest amount.

2. **A carbohydrate is the fuel that is burned during general daily activities.**

Think of your body as an engine:

- **Fat** can be compared to the oil in your engine.
- **Carbohydrates** are the gasoline.
- **Protein** can be compared to the engine block; you need a strong block to perform.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. **What is a balanced diet? What percentage of calories should come from fat, protein, and carbohydrates? Which food source has the most calories?**
2. **What are common sources for fat, protein, and carbohydrates?**
3. **Which foods should be our main source of energy?**

This information is for general informational purposes only and is by no means exhaustive or all-inclusive. It is not intended as medical or professional advice, nor to replace consultation with a doctor, physical therapist, or other health care provider (HCP). Please check with your HCP before beginning any activity described in this material. If you experience discomfort, pain, or injury during any activity, stop and consult your HCP before continuing. State Fund does not warrant the accuracy of any information provided herein nor assume any responsibility or liability for your use of such information. Your use of any information provided herein is entirely at your own risk.