ALL ABOUT FATS

Why do I need fats in my diet?

Fats help the body absorb nutrients, store energy, give energy, protect organs, stay warm, produce hormones, support cell growth, and give the feeling of satiety (or feeling full). However, not all fats are created equal.

Saturated fats and **trans fats** can increase bad cholesterol (LDL) levels and should be limited. Saturated fats are typically found in animal products like butter, lard, cream-based sauces and dishes, high-fat meats (bacon, hot dogs, sausages), high-fat dairy products, poultry skin, gravies, and tropical oils (coconut and palm oil). Trans fats, mainly found in highly processed foods, margarine and shortenings, are even more harmful than saturated fats and should be avoided as much as possible. Foods with ingredients containing "hydrogenated oil" or "partially hydrogenated oil" contain trans fats.

Monounsaturated and **polyunsaturated fats**, also called the "healthy fats" or "unsaturated fats" can help reduce bad cholesterol (LDL) levels in the blood and provide Vitamin E (an antioxidant). Although monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats provide health benefits, they should always be consumed in moderation.

What's the deal with Omega Fatty Acids?

Some polyunsaturated fats contain omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids. These are fats the body cannot make but are essential for good health. It has been shown these fatty acids can decrease triglyceride levels, lower blood pressure and even decrease the risk of arrhythmias (irregular heartbeats).

Sources of Unsaturated (healthy) Fats:

- Oily fish (salmon, herring, mackerel, tuna)
- Nuts (walnuts, almonds, cashews, pecans, peanuts and peanut butter)
- Seeds (chia seeds, flaxseeds, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds)
- Avocado
- Plant based oils (olive, canola, safflower, sesame and flaxseed oil)
- Tofu and soybeans