

GET YOUR FATS RIGHT

From zeroing in on the right combination of oils and their correct usage, to knowing the good fats from the bad ones, here's some kitchen wisdom we could all use

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FIRST let's start with the fact — fat is not necessarily bad. In fact, fat is integral to our health. Unfortunately, due to a lot of misinformation, fat has become a bad word in a skinny-aspiring world. There are good fats or essential fats, and bad fats. The key is to know the sources of both and strike the right balance. The body definitely requires some essential fatty acids.

- 20-30 per cent of total calories in a diet must come from fats.
- Sources of good fat include nuts, seeds, fatty fish and cold pressed oils.
- Foods containing monounsaturated fats (MUFA) reduce low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, which makes them desirable for the body. MUFA are found in mustard, rice bran, sesame, rapeseed, groundnut and olive oil.
- Along with the quantity of fat, the quality of fat is also important. A diet high in MUFA, with no trans-fats can be helpful.
- Fried food contains the undesirable and fattening trans-fatty acids. Sources of trans-fats include food from *halwais*, cheap eateries, Indian snacks like fried *namkeens*, *pakor*as, *samosa*, *kachori*, *paapri chaat*, *gol-gappas*, *tikki*, Indian sweets like *patisa*, *gulab jamun*, *jalebi*, *marti* and majority of Indian preparations at *dhabas* or restaurants like *dal makhni*, butter chicken and *shahi paneer*.
- Choose a variety of vegetable oils instead of a sin-

TRADITIONAL FATS LIKE GHEE, COCONUT OIL AND BUTTER NEEDN'T BE TOTALLY STOPPED. THEY HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY IN IMMUNITY AND DIGESTION

gle source. This is because most of the vegetable oils don't have an ideal mix of fats. Go for blended oils such as mustard, canola, sesame, rice bran and olive oil.

- Kick refined oils out of the window. They have dominated the Indian households for two decades now, giving us imbalanced fats and are responsible for various heart problems, cancer, gall bladder stones and for disturbing the overall immune system.
- High heat refining takes the oil to a very high temperature where its goodness (vitamins and antioxidants) gets destroyed. Therefore, choose less-refined or cold pressed oils instead.

DO NOT LEAVE THE LID OF THE OIL CONTAINER OPEN FOR EVEN A SHORT TIME. THE OIL REACTS WITH ATMOSPHERIC AIR, WHICH RESULTS IN QUALITY DETERIORATION

They retain all their flavour, aroma, and nutritional value. Olive, peanut and sunflower are among the oils that are obtained through cold pressing.

- Do not heat the oil without food for more than a minute.
- Oils with high smoking point should be chosen for frying. Smoking point of an oil is the temperature at which it starts emitting a blue haze, indicating formation of decomposition products.
- Most vegetable oils have adequately high smoking points while butter and coconut oil are not suitable for frying due to low smoking point.
- What's even better than using the best oils is to substitute it with their original sources. For instance, have sunflower seeds, peanuts and almonds instead of their oil variations.

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