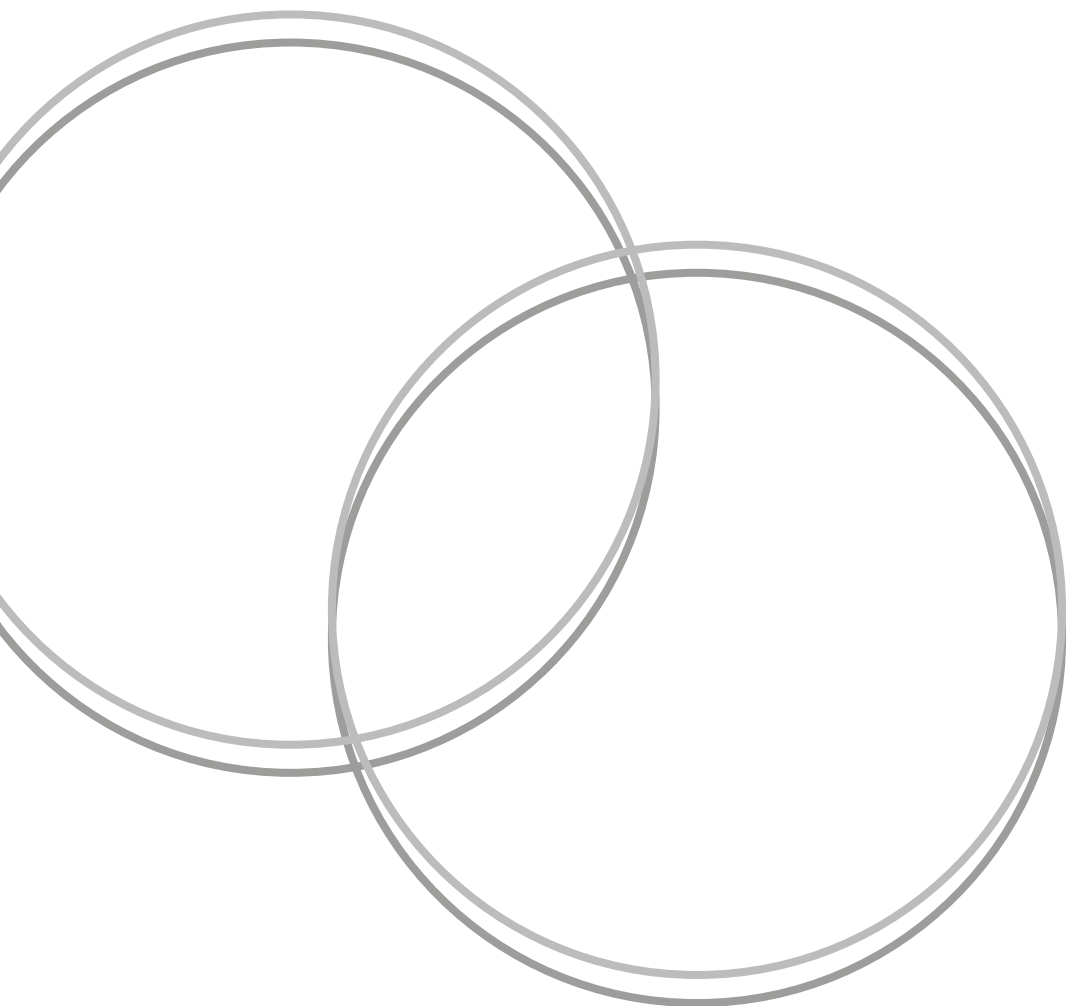


How to follow a minimal fat diet of 20g of fat or less per day



There are certain medical conditions where it may be recommended to significantly limit the amount of fat in your diet. For example, very high triglyceride levels in the blood may cause conditions such as pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas). The only way to safely and rapidly restore raised triglyceride levels to a normal range is to follow a very low fat diet.

This information is aimed at those who have been advised by a healthcare professional to follow a diet containing no more than 20g of fat per day. It is advised that you are referred to a registered Dietitian for support.

The following information will give you examples of low fat and fat-free foods to include into your diet and also suggest foods to avoid while following a very low-fat diet. There is also an example meal plan.

Nutritional labels

When following a very low-fat diet it can be helpful to read nutritional labels to check the fat content of food and drink items. The fat content can vary between different products and brand names of food and drink.

Below is a key to looking at food labels per 100g/100ml:

Medium /high fat Try to avoid	Any food with more than 3g fat per 100g, any drink with more than 1.5g fat per 100ml.
Low fat Try to minimise	Any food with 0.5g - 3g of fat per 100g, any drink with less than 0.5g-1.5g fat per 100ml.
Fat-free Eat freely	Any food with less than 0.5g per 100g, any drink with less than 0.5g per 100ml.

It can be helpful to make a shopping list before your weekly shop. You can check food labels online on supermarket websites before you go to find out if individual foods are suitable.

Once you are aware of the foods and drinks that are low in fat or fat-free it will become easier to put together a meal plan that works for you. Whilst following a very low-fat diet it is important to try to maintain a healthy balanced diet.

You can do this by:

- Having some starchy food at each meal, ideally wholemeal varieties.
- Avoiding foods with lots of added sugar/refined carbohydrates.
- Having 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day.
- Having 2-3 portions of food that contain protein.
- Having 2-3 portions dairy foods a day.

If you are following a very low fat diet long term then you may be required to take a regular multivitamin to supplement your diet with vitamins A, D, E. A registered Dietitian can advise you on this.

Protein foods

The following tables give examples of groups of foods that are low fat/fat free which are suitable to choose and high fat foods to avoid.

Low fat /fat-free food and drink	Food and drink to avoid
<p>Turkey and chicken without the skin</p> <p>white fish (cod, haddock, sole, plaice)</p> <p>tinned tuna (in brine or spring water)</p> <p>shellfish (prawns, lobster)</p> <p>Quorn, Quorn mince</p> <p>Quorn chicken pieces and Quorn fillets</p> <p>extra-lean ham</p> <p>egg white,</p> <p>egg replacer</p>	<p>Red meat, e.g</p> <p>sausages</p> <p>bacon</p> <p>kebab meat</p> <p>burgers and meat pies</p> <p>lamb</p> <p>beef</p> <p>pork</p> <p>gammon</p> <p>salami</p> <p>pate</p> <p>whole eggs</p> <p>nuts and seeds</p> <p>peanut butter or other kinds of nut butter</p> <p>soybeans/edamame</p> <p>tofu</p> <p>oily fish (salmon, sardines trout, mackerel, herring)</p> <p>dark poultry</p>

Fruit and vegetables

Low fat /fat-free food and drink	Food and drink to avoid
Fruit and vegetables (all fresh, canned, frozen and juiced) water chestnuts beans lentils potato sweet potato yam plantain – cooked without fat	Avocado high-fat salad dressings fried or coated vegetables olives coleslaw coconut nuts seeds fruit and vegetables in batter, e.g onion rings

Starchy carbohydrates

Low fat /fat-free food and drink

Bread including white brown and wholemeal without seeds and nuts
chapatti made without fat
breakfast cereals without nuts and seeds
crumpets
crispbreads and rice cakes
wheat flour
plain and brown rice
white and wholegrain pasta
plain noodles
couscous
quinoa
All without added oils

Food and drink to avoid

Croissants
pastries
mince pies
all scones
waffles
cream crackers
water biscuits
nut-based cereals
granola
pizza
samosa
speciality breads like focaccia
ciabatta
garlic bread
naan
paratha
chapatti made with fat
teacakes
fruit bread
yorkshire pudding
fried rice
creamy pasta dishes
crisps
chips
potato products such as oven chips, roasted potatoes
waffles, croquettes

Dairy foods and its alternatives

Low fat/fat-free food and drink	Food and drink to avoid
Fat-free cottage cheese curd cheese quark soya milk soya yoghurt skimmed milk fat-free yoghurt UHT skimmed milk condensed skimmed milk rice milk soya light milk soya yoghurt	Cream cream cheese low-fat and full-fat cheese crème fraiche coconut cream coffee creamer full cream and semi-skimmed milk evaporated milk goat milk sheep milk reduced-fat coconut milk reduced-fat single cream light cheese spread full-fat yoghurt Greek yoghurt light fromage frais cashew milk, hemp milk, oat milk and almond milk coconut yoghurt

Snacks, cakes and biscuits

Low fat /fat-free food and drink

Popcorn cooked with minimum added fat or oil
chestnuts
jelly beans
jelly babies
milk puddings made with skimmed milk
boiled, jellied and gummed sweets
jelly
meringue
sorbet
fruit lollies

Food and drink to avoid

Cake
biscuits
shortbread
flapjacks
chocolate
fudge
toffee
Indian sweets
nuts and seeds
ice cream desserts
ice cream lollies
fudge
Indian cakes and desserts
custard
milk puddings
ice cream
cereal bars
fruit scones

Drinks

<p>Low fat /fat-free food and drink</p> <p>Most vegetable soups made without cream, water, tea, coffee, fruit juice, fizzy drinks and squash</p>	<p>Food and drink to avoid</p> <p>Cream-based soups, drinks made with or topped with cream, hot chocolate, cocoa, drinks made with full cream milk</p>
---	---

Seasonings, flavourings, dressings

<p>Low fat /fat-free food and drink</p> <p>Herbs, spices, garlic, pepper, lemon juice, stock cubes, yeast and beef extract, mustard, soy sauce, vinegar, pickles, jam, marmalade, low-fat salad dressings. Tomato ketchup, brown sauce, mustard, mint sauce, fat-free salad dressings</p>	<p>Food and drink to avoid</p> <p>Hummus, peanut butter, chocolate spread, salad cream, mayonnaise, french dressing, horseradish sauce, lemon curd, reduced-fat mayonnaise and salad cream, guacamole and tzatziki</p>
--	---

Cooking methods

It is best to use a cooking method that does not need fat such as:

- Poaching
- Steaming
- Microwaving
- Grilling
- Boiling
- Casseroling.

Avoid frying food using cooking oil; a non-stick pan can help you to cook without oil. You can use a 1kcal cooking oil spray but limit this to two sprays. To flavour food try adding low fat seasoning such as herbs and spices.

Meal ideas

It can be beneficial to spread out the 20g of fat throughout the day. Here is a suggestion of what that might look like: 4g or less for breakfast, 6g or less for lunch, 6g or less for evening meal and 4g or less for a snack.

Breakfasts:

- 2 slices of non-seeded toast with a thin layer of light spread, jam or marmite.
- Cereal (avoid nut-based) e.g cornflakes, fruit muesli and bran flakes with skimmed milk.
- Fat-free yoghurt with berries.
- Toasting muffins spread with jam, marmalade, honey or yeast extract.

Lunches:

- Jacket potato served with fat-free cottage cheese or half a tin of baked beans, with a side salad and a low fat/fat-free dressing.
- Chunky vegetable soup and 2 slices of (non-seeded) wholegrain bread.
- Sandwiches (non-seeded bread) made with lean ham, mustard and watercress, or tinned tuna and cucumber.
- Lean chicken breast (skin removed) or turkey breast, pasta and salad with low fat/fat-free salad dressing.

Main meals:

- Poached or grilled fish served with boiled new potatoes and peas.
- Cottage pie made with Quorn mince and vegetables/salad (without butter and oil to cook).
- Pasta bake made with pasta, half a can of tinned tomatoes and tuna/Quorn with vegetables/salad.
- Lean chicken breast or Quorn pieces with dried egg noodles, stir fry vegetables and soy sauce.

Ideas for snacks:

- Fresh, dried, canned and frozen fruits
- Low fat frozen yoghurt, fruit sorbet or ice lolly
- Popcorn – cooked with minimum added fat or oil
- Crispbread spread with cottage cheese.

If you are following the diet to reduce your triglyceride levels then you may be advised to cut out alcohol from your diet and reduce refined sugar and carbohydrates. Please speak to a registered Dietitian for more information regarding this.

For further information and very low-fat recipes please visit the heart UK charity website www.heartuk.org.uk. You may need to adjust the oil content of the recipes so that they fit in with the guidelines given here.

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

Author: Nutrition and Dietetics
October 2024
Review: October 2027
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
www.ouh.nhs.uk/information



Making a difference across our hospitals

charity@ouh.nhs.uk | 01865 743 444 | hospitalcharity.co.uk

OXFORD HOSPITALS CHARITY (REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 1175809)

