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What's all the fuss about sugar, fat and salt?

Canteen fact sheet

Fat, sugar and salt get lots of bad publicity but what is all the fuss really about? Adults and children need sugar, fat and salt – however too much in your diet can lead to problems.

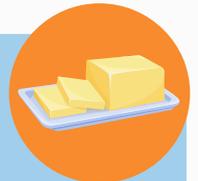
SUGAR

- Sugar, otherwise known as glucose, fructose and sucrose is a carbohydrate that can be found in a large variety of food and drinks
- Although a surge of energy is felt upon consumption of foods high in sugar, it is only temporary and foods high in added sugar often have minimal nutritional value
- Excess consumption of sugar may result in additional weight gain as sugar that is not utilised as fuel is stored as fat
- To enjoy a sweet-tasting meal consider adding fruit, as the sugar found in fruit is naturally occurring and contains the added benefits of fibre and vitamins.



FAT

- Fat is often used to improve the flavour and texture of many common foods
- Fat provides over twice the energy than that of carbohydrates and protein
- Over-consumption of fats can easily amount to weight gain, obesity and high cholesterol as foods high in fat are energy-dense
- Unsaturated fats are the healthiest fats and help aid in lowering cholesterol and reducing the risk of heart disease, examples of unsaturated fats are olive, peanut and canola oils, seeds, nuts and avocado.



SALT

- Salt, which is the combination of sodium and chloride is responsible for various physiological benefits such as aiding in hydration, transmission of nerve impulses and normal cell function
- Many processed foods contain high amounts of salt and is most often listed as sodium on food labels
- Increased salt consumption can cause high blood pressure and increase the risk of heart disease and stroke
- A liking for salty foods usually develops during early childhood and, therefore children should be discouraged from adding extra salt to their meals. A way to reduce salt consumption is to flavour food with herbs and spices and resist placing the salt shaker on the dining table.



Department of **Health**
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