

## ~ Ask Granny Earth ~

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Good fat



Bad fat

### Ask Granny Earth

**I'm thoroughly confused about the "good fat/bad fat" thing. Do you know the difference and if so, could you please explain it in simple, easy to understand terms?**

I sympathize with you, because until recently it was all very confusing to me too. Like all new information, especially if it's technical, it takes a while to process and even longer to understand. Such is the case with good oil, bad oil. I will do my best to explain the differences, as I understand them. The information that I'm using for this article was taken from <http://www.stop-trans-fat.com/mary-enig.html>.

Dr. Enig is widely known for her research on the nutritional aspects of fats and oils. She is Director of the Nutritional Sciences Division of Enig Associates, Inc., a Fellow of the American College of Nutrition and a member of the American Institute of Nutrition. Her years of experience in the analysis of food, fats and oils, provide a foundation for her active role in food labeling issues at the federal and state levels.

For the purpose of this article, there are some definitions (relating to oils) that you'll need to know, such as:

1. Hydrogenation: is a process that adds hydrogen to solidify vegetable oils. In the hydrogenation of vegetable oils, the oil is reacted under pressure with hydrogen gas at 250-400 degrees F. for several hours in the presence of a catalyst such as nickel or platinum. This process cannot control where the hydrogen atoms are added to the 'unsaturated' double bonds. It converts natural food components into compounds which are partially hydrogenated fats, such as monounsaturated and polyunsaturated oils. The purpose of hydrogenation is to solidify oil, so that it can resemble 'real foods' such as butter. It gives food spreadability, texture, 'good mouth feel' and increased shelf life. But it is *always* detrimental to health.
2. Fatty acids: The 'natural' building blocks of fats.
3. Trans-fatty acids: (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated) BAD FAT!
4. Saturated fatty acids: Have an adequate number of hydrogen atoms; GOOD FAT.
5. Unsaturated fatty acids: missing adequate hydrogen atoms, chemically unstable.

Research shows that consumption of trans fatty acids from partially hydrogenated vegetable oil has adverse health effects such as: heart disease, cancer, diabetes, low immunity and obesity. The reason for this is that trans fatty acids cause alterations to numerous physical functions of cell membranes and enzymes in our bodies.

Dr. Enig's research shows that increased consumption of trans fatty acids in the past 35 years directly correlates to the increase in cancer cases in the U.S. and researchers at Harvard have demonstrated that people who consumed the most trans fatty acids, also had the most heart disease.

Dr. Enig says that in 1958, Dr. Ancel Keys of the University of Minnesota claimed that the partially hydrogenated vegetable oils with their trans fatty acids were the *culprits* in heart disease. The edible oil industry was swift to squelch that information - they shifted the emphasis to "saturated" fat and started their phony attack on meat and dairy fat, even though study after study showed that there was no relationship between saturated fat (animal fat) intake and the development of heart disease. How, one might ask, could this happen? A wise old man once told me, "Follow the money trail".

As time went on, the whole heart disease agenda became a multi-million dollar business that was benefiting the researchers who were funded by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute. Meanwhile consumers continued to

get more and more heart disease. The consumer may not be dying as often as they were 30 years ago, but they are undergoing more surgery and they are swallowing more expensive cholesterol-lowering drugs. So while the so-called mortality figures may have decreased, the incidence of heart disease has greatly increased.

It's hard to alter our thinking/belief system after being inundated with so much mis-information from the food industry for decades. *I used to think that saturated meant that it was bad for me and unsaturated was good!* I've come to learn that it's just the opposite. But things are changing, and the information is out there, if you look for it. The way I've begun to think about the good fat/bad fat thing, is to remember that all processed foods containing these monounsaturated and polyunsaturated oils are bad for us. This means that all margarines, most salad dressings, store bought cakes, cookies, fast food french-fries and many other things - contain trans fatty acid oils. Read your labels. Look for the words monounsaturated or polyunsaturated- avoid like the plague!

Animal fat is more recognizable by our bodies than these trans fatty acid oils. If you are vegetarian, or just can't make the change over to butter or animal fat yet, Flaxseed oil is an excellent choice for adding good oil to your diet, as is Olive oil and Sesame oil.

As far as cholesterol goes; surely you're not still buying into that myth are you? Our bodies need cholesterol! If we don't get enough, our liver has to work overtime manufacturing it. There's a lot of credible research to show that cholesterol is **not** the cause of arteriosclerosis. If I get enough response I'll share recent research in a future article.