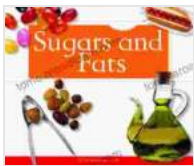


# Unraveling the Secrets of Sugars and Fats: Healthy Eating with MyPlate

In today's fast-paced world, navigating the vast array of food choices can be overwhelming. Sugars and fats often occupy the spotlight in discussions about nutrition, but understanding their roles in our diet and making informed decisions can lead to a healthier lifestyle. This article will delve into the complexities of sugars and fats, providing guidance from the trusted MyPlate guidelines to help you fuel your body wisely.



## Sugars and Fats (Healthy Eating with MyPlate)

by Beth Bence Reinke

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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## Added Sugars: Unmasking the Sweet Deception

Added sugars are those added to foods during processing or preparation, and they can quickly add up in our diets. Consuming excess added sugars can contribute to weight gain, increased risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and other health concerns.

To keep added sugars in check, it's recommended to limit daily intake to less than 10% of total calories. Reading food labels carefully can help you identify and avoid hidden sources of added sugars. Choose foods with little

to no added sugars, and opt for natural sweeteners like fruits and honey in moderation.

## **Understanding Fats: Not All Fats Are Created Equal**

Fats are essential nutrients that play vital roles in our bodies. They provide energy, support hormone production, and aid in nutrient absorption.

However, not all fats are created equal.

- **Saturated fats:** Found primarily in animal products like red meat, butter, and cheese, saturated fats have been linked to an increased risk of heart disease if consumed in excess. Limit saturated fats to less than 10% of daily calories.
- **Trans fats:** These harmful fats are often found in processed foods, margarine, and fried foods. Trans fats raise LDL ("bad") cholesterol and lower HDL ("good") cholesterol, significantly increasing heart disease risk. Aim to eliminate trans fats from your diet.
- **Unsaturated fats:** These healthy fats are found in olive oil, avocados, nuts, and seeds. Unsaturated fats can help lower LDL cholesterol and improve heart health. Aim to make unsaturated fats a major part of your daily fat intake.

## **MyPlate Guidelines for Healthy Eating**

The MyPlate guidelines provide a simple and effective framework for making healthy eating choices. This visual guide depicts the recommended proportions of major food groups to consume daily.

- **Vegetables:** Fill half your plate with vegetables, choosing a variety of colors and types to ensure a wide range of nutrients.

- **Fruits:** Include fruits in the other half of your plate, selecting whole fruits over fruit juices or processed snacks.
- **Grains:** Choose whole grains over refined grains whenever possible. Whole grains are rich in fiber, vitamins, and minerals.
- **Protein:** Lean protein sources, such as beans, lentils, fish, and poultry, should make up about a quarter of your plate.
- **Dairy:** Include low-fat dairy products, such as milk, yogurt, and cheese, as part of your daily intake.
- **Oils:** Use healthy oils, like olive oil or avocado oil, sparingly for cooking and dressings.

By following the MyPlate guidelines, you can create balanced meals that meet your nutritional needs and promote overall health and well-being.

### **Choosing Healthy Fats: A Practical Guide**

Incorporating healthy fats into your diet doesn't have to be complicated. Here are some practical tips:

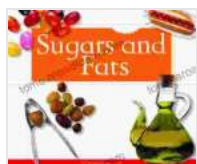
- **Opt for grilled or baked meats:** Instead of frying, grilling or baking meats can help reduce saturated fat intake.
- **Choose lean protein sources:** Beans, lentils, fish, and poultry are all excellent sources of lean protein that are lower in saturated fat.
- **Use healthy oils:** Olive oil, avocado oil, and canola oil are all good choices for cooking and dressings.
- **Incorporate nuts and seeds:** Nuts and seeds provide healthy unsaturated fats, fiber, and other essential nutrients. Add them to

salads, yogurt, or oatmeal for a nutrient-packed boost.

- **Limit processed foods:** Processed foods often contain hidden fats, including trans fats and saturated fats. Opt for whole, unprocessed foods whenever possible.

## : Empowering Your Choices

Understanding the role of sugars and fats in our diet is crucial for making informed food choices that support our health. By reducing added sugars, choosing healthy fats, and following the MyPlate guidelines, we can fuel our bodies with nutrient-rich foods that promote well-being and reduce the risk of chronic diseases. Remember, knowledge is power, and by embracing these principles, you can take control of your dietary choices and live a healthier, more vibrant life.



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