

It can be tempting at times to overindulge in tasty treats. Moderation is key and we must be mindful that overconsumption of foods high in fats, sugar and salt can lead to obesity which increases the risk of developing chronic non-communicable diseases such as Heart Disease, Diabetes, Hypertension, High Cholesterol, and other health complications.

When making food choices, we should remember to consider vitamins and minerals. Why? Because most processed foods purchased often provide most of their calories only from sugar and fat, and provide just a few (if any) vitamins and minerals.

Read food labels to find out the number of calories, saturated and trans fats, sugar and salt in specific items you purchase.

Here are some healthier alternatives to foods high in saturated fat and trans fats, salt and sugar. Swapping one for the other can enable you to make healthier food choices for yourself, children and loved ones. Don't be too surprised if you see that one or more items repeat in different areas!

Fats

Although fats are essential for energy and add flavour to food, too much fats, specifically saturated and trans-fats can cause harm to your health by raising bad cholesterol levels and cause heart diseases.¹ Eating foods lower in saturated fats and trans-fats will help to reduce the risk of obesity, heart disease and other health complications.

Foods with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are healthier options. According to the American Heart Association, these healthy fats help to reduce bad cholesterol levels and raise good cholesterol levels. They also provide Vitamin E and make you feel full, which can help to reduce your calorie intake.²

Foods with Unhealthy Fats	Foods with Healthier Fats
Chips and fries	Baked sweet potato wedges; carrot or celery sticks
Milk Chocolate	Dark chocolate
Ice cream	Natural blended fruit smoothie with no added sugar; fruit salad
Regular Butter or Margarine	Mashed avocado, nut butter, olive oil
Burger	Homemade sandwich with lean meat e.g. Chicken breast; Lentil patty/burger
Pizza	Veggie or grilled chicken pizza with cauliflower or whole grain base
Full cream milk; whole milk	Skimmed or low-fat milk; almond or soy milk

Foods with Unhealthy Fats	Foods with Healthier Fats
Salad dressing	Freshly squeezed lime, lemon or orange juice; Basic vinaigrette; Wine vinegar
Butter, margarine or spread on bread	Applesauce; mashed Avocado
Cookies	Low calorie-low-sodium fat free crackers
Cakes, muffins, donuts, sweet rolls and other pastries	English muffin, bagels without fat/spread, fruit salad
Canned beans and peas	Fresh beans and peas
Homemade gravy with fat and/or milk	Gravy made with water, fat-free milk
Cheese	Fat-free cheese; goat cheese (if available and affordable)
Coffee creamer	Low-fat, reduced or skimmed milk
Patty	Homemade sandwich
Pasta with Alfredo or other white sauce	Whole grain pasta with fresh tomato sauce or paste/marinara
Pasta with cheese	Pasta with vegetables
Cold cuts/Lunch meats (salami, bologna, ham slices, spam)	Lean meats (turkey breast, chicken breast)
Ground beef	Ground turkey, chicken mince
Canned Tuna, Sardine or Salmon in oil	Tuna, sardine or salmon in water
Whole eggs	Egg white
Fried eggs	Boiled or poached eggs
Full fat yogurt	Low fat yogurt
Some shellfish eg. Shrimp, Prawns, Crab, Lobster (High cholesterol)	Low cholesterol shellfish such as Oysters, Clams, Scallops and Mussels. Salmon and white fish e.g. Snapper
Chicken/ turkey with the skin	Chicken without skin
Fried Chicken	Grilled/Baked chicken
Red meats with marbling (oxtail, beef chuck & rib, goat, etc.) and some Offals e.g. Liver, Kidney	Leaner cuts of meat (e.g. Beef round or loin, chicken breast without skin, turkey breast and fish); black beans, chickpeas; Offals in small amounts as they provide micronutrients as Iron, Zinc, etc
Pork (spare ribs, untrimmed loin and with skin)	Pork tenderloin or trimmed; Smoked Pork chops
Crisps; Commercial popcorn	Air popped popcorn with no added butter

Foods with Unhealthy Fats	Foods with Healthier Fats
Mashed Potatoes with added fats (mayonnaise, butter and/or milk)	Mashed vegetables with olive oil margarine or no fat. Eg. mashed pumpkin and carrots
Mayonnaise	Light mayonnaise or mustard
Cooking Oil ³	Coconut oil; pure olive oil (preferably not heated); Corn oil; Canola oil
Heavy cream	Freshly grated/blended Coconut milk

Salt

Excessive amounts of salt or sodium can increase your risk of high blood pressure and kidney disease. It is recommended that the average adult should not consume more than 2300mg of sodium or 1 teaspoon of salt per day.

There are also different types of salt available on the market, some of which are said to be healthier variations to table salt. These include Sea Salt, Kosher Salt and Pink Himalayan Salt. According to research by the American Heart Association, table salt and most sea salts contain about 40% sodium by weight.⁴ Kosher Salt and Sea Salt may be deemed as suitable alternatives to table salt. This is because 1 teaspoon of Kosher or Sea Salt would contain less sodium compared to Table Salt. This is due to the fact that Kosher and Sea Salts have larger grains/crystals, hence lower numbers of crystals in 1 teaspoon.⁴

This is why we encourage you to read food labels to ensure you don't exceed your salt intake. You may use the below list to swap out high salt foods for healthier options:

High Salt Foods	Low Salt Alternative
Bacon, sausage, frankfurters	Low sodium, fresh meats
Ramen noodles	Spaghetti, macaroni
Pre-packaged Chips and French Fries	Baked Sweet potato wedges; Baked Potato without added fat; bread fruit or corn chips/wedges
Table Salt (for flavouring during cooking)	Natural herbs and spices; vinegar, citrus
Pizza	Veggie or grilled chicken pizza with cauliflower or whole grain base
Salted nuts	Unsalted/ fresh nuts
Cup soup	Homemade chicken or fish soup with no salt or pack soup mix
Powdered seasonings	Fresh herbs and spices
Canned beans and peas e.g. Baked beans	Dried peas and beans
Cheese sauce	Vegetable sauce
Canned vegetables	Fresh and frozen vegetables

High Salt Foods	Low Salt Alternative
Processed cheese	Low-sodium, natural cheese; Goat cheese
Cold cuts and lunch meats	Low salt/sodium free meats and turkey or chicken Breast
Canned meats, poultry and seafood	Fresh cuts of meat, poultry or seafood
Packaged macaroni and cheese	Fresh baked mac and cheese with low-sodium cheese
Salad dressing	Lemon, lime or orange juice; olive oil/vinaigrette
Crackers and tortillas	Whole grain, salt free biscuits and crackers
Canned soups	Homemade soups without added salt
Breads	Whole grain, low-sodium breads
Pretzels	Unsalted pretzels
Condiments (soy sauce, teriyaki sauce,	Lemon juice, Fresh tomato sauce/ freshly diced tomatoes or vinegar for flavoring
Pre-packaged cakes and pies	Low salt versions or homemade without salt

Sugar

Sugar...that sweet thing we just cannot get over. Are you aware that too much sugar can increase your risk of Diabetes and cause damage to organs such as the liver?⁵ If not, then now is the time to know. Excessive sugar intake, especially in liquid form, is harmful to the body. This may cause increased acne, risk of heart disease and fatigue. Not only this, but it can lead to overweight and obesity because when the liver is unable to process and release all of the sugar consumed, that excess is stored as fat in the body. Below are a few high sugar treats that you might want to consider changing from now:

High Sugar Foods	Alternative
Cakes, doughnuts, tarts and other pastries	Fruit and/or vegetable salads; raisin toast (wheat/whole grain)
Soda	Freshly squeezed/blended fruit and/or vegetable juices with no added sugar; Infused water with citrus, fruits and herbs
Ice cream	Frozen fruits; Natural blended fruit smoothie
Bag Juice, Popsicles and Kisko	Frozen fruits; homemade frozen fruit pops
Sweets/candy	Dried fruits; fresh fruit dices or slices
Milkshakes	Blended fruit smoothies with low fat or skimmed milk

High Sugar Foods	Alternative
Some cereal/granola bars	Homemade trail mix
Breakfast cereals	Whole grain cereals with no added sugar e.g. plain cornflakes
Canned baked beans and other beans	Dried peas and beans; Drained and washed beans
BBQ Sauce and Ketchup	Mustard; tomato paste
White rice, pasta and breads	Whole grain rice, quinoa, barley or homemade cauliflower rice whole grain pasta and bread or whole wheat wrap
Kids Juice Box	Freshly squeezed or blended fruit juice with no added sugar
Cookies and sweet biscuits	Low sugar or homemade with whole wheat flour or oatmeal
Ketchup or Jarred tomato sauce	Fresh tomato sauce; mustard; freshly diced tomatoes
Alcohol	Red wine
Whole or full cream milk	Almond or soy milk
Milk chocolate	Dark chocolate; Strawberry or other fruit dipped in dark chocolate
White spaghetti, fettucine and lasagna noodles	Zucchini or squash ribbons or strips. (Use a mandolin, knife or peeler)
Tacos	Lettuce leaves or whole grain wrap
Chocolate chips	Dried fruit
Heavy cream	Coconut milk (fresh not canned)
Sugar	Raw honey (in small amounts as honey has fewer calories but is sweeter)

References

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