



The Nutrition Source

Top Food Sources of Saturated Fat in the U.S.

Pizza and cheese are the biggest food sources of saturated fat in the U.S. diet, and other dairy products and meat products are also major contributors. Keep in mind that all foods contain a mix of fats. Even “healthy” foods like chicken, fish, nuts, and oils do contribute some saturated fat to the diet, though they are much lower in saturated fat than beef, cheese, and ice cream. And it would be a mistake to cut back on nuts, oils, and fish to minimize saturated fat.

As a general rule, it’s a good idea to keep your intake of saturated fats as low as possible. We can’t eliminate saturated fat from our diets completely, because foods that are good sources of healthy fats—olive oil, peanuts, salmon—also contain a little bit of saturated fat. Since red meat and full-fat dairy products are among the main sources of saturated fat in our diets, keeping these foods low is the best way to reduce intake of saturated fat. And when you cut back on red meat and dairy products, replace them with foods that contain healthy fats—fatty fish like salmon, nuts and seeds, plant oils, avocados—not with foods that are high in refined carbohydrates. Here is a table showing the top food sources of saturated fat in the American diet.

Food	Contribution to saturated fat intake (%)
Regular cheese	8.5
Pizza	5.9
Grain-based desserts	5.8
Dairy desserts	5.6
Chicken and chicken mixed dishes	5.5
Sausage, franks, bacon, and ribs	4.9
Burgers	4.4
Mexican mixed dishes	4.1
Beef and beef mixed dishes	4.1

Reduced fat milk	3.9
Pasta and pasta dishes	3.7
Whole milk	3.4
Eggs and egg mixed dishes	3.2
Candy	3.1
Butter	2.9
Potato/corn/other chips	2.4
Nuts/seeds and nut/seed mixed dishes	2.1
Fried white potatoes	2.0

Source: National Cancer Institute. Risk Factor Monitoring and Methods: Table 1. Top Food Sources of Saturated Fata among U.S. Population, 2005–2006. [NHANES](#).

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