

This page was adapted from the government's website on the latest food pyramid.
<http://www.mypyramid.gov/pyramid/oils.html#>

What are "oils"?

Oils are fats that are liquid at room temperature. Oils may come from many different plants or fish but most should come from fish, nuts, or vegetables which are healthier. Oil is better than solid fats and you should limit your intake of solid fats.

Some common oils are:

- canola oil
 - corn oil
 - cottonseed oil
 - **olive oil (still one of the best oils to use health wise)****
 - safflower oil
 - soybean oil
 - sunflower oil
 - Enova oil (this is a new product on the market that claims to prevent the oil from being stored as fat in the body)**

**See Dr. Andrew Weil's website for a more detailed analysis of oils.
<http://www.drweil.com/drw/u/id/QAA358076>

Some oils are used mainly as flavorings, such as walnut oil and sesame oil. A number of foods are naturally high in oils, like:

- nuts
- olives
- some fish
- avocados

Foods that are mainly oil include mayonnaise, certain salad dressings, and soft (tub or squeeze) margarine with no *trans* fats. Check the Nutrition Facts label to find margarines with 0 grams of *trans* fat. Amounts of *trans* fat is now required on labels.

Most oils are high in monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats, and low in saturated fats. Oils from plant sources (vegetable and nut oils) do not contain any cholesterol. In fact, no foods from plants sources contain cholesterol.

NOTE: A few plant oils, however, including coconut oil and palm kernel oil, are high in saturated fats and for nutritional purposes should be considered to be solid fats.

Solid Fats:

Solid fats are fats that are solid at room temperature, like butter and shortening. Solid fats come from many animal foods and can be made from vegetable oils through a process called hydrogenation. Some common solid fats are:

- butter
- beef fat (tallow, suet)
- chicken fat
- pork fat (lard)
- stick margarine
- shortening

I like to use Smart Balance but in limited quantity. See Dr. Weil's discussion on the use of this product. <http://www.drweil.com/drw/u/id/QAA46643>

For in depth information on food products including fruits and vegetables go to the government database and search for that product. It is a large database but does not contain every food item. You may have to use your own judgment to guesstimate nutritional information for a specific item.

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/search/>