

Facts about Fats

Low fat eating for a healthy lifestyle

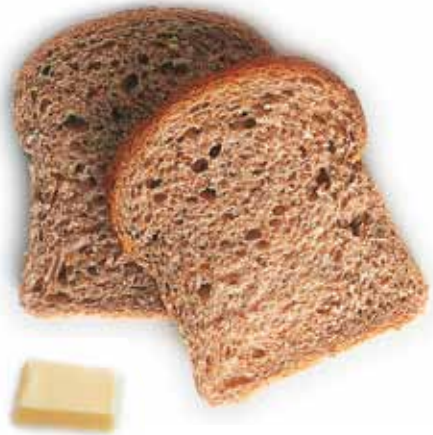


Why do we need to eat fat?

- A small amount of fat in our food is essential as fat is found in all body cells, helps us make hormone-like substances and carries the fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E and K).
- It provides a rich source of energy (kJ/kcals).
- It can make food tastier - compare a dry piece of toast to one with butter or margarine.

What can happen if we eat too much?

- Fat gives us twice as many kilojoules/calories as protein and carbohydrate, so eating large quantities of fat can easily give us more energy than we need. For example, just a tablespoon of butter gives the same amount of energy as two slices of bread.
- We store excess energy as fat, and gain weight.
- Being overweight can lead to a number of health problems such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, reduced mobility and breathing difficulties.



How much fat do we eat?



Some New Zealanders eat within the recommended amount of fat per day (33% or less of calories from fat), although many still eat too much.

If we are eating 2000 kcal (8400 kJ) a day, no more than 660 kcal (2770kJ) should come from fat, approximately 73g fat/day.

Can fat be good?

As with everything to do with food and nutrition, the answer is yes and no! There are several different types of fat, some of which are more beneficial to health than others. The main types are saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. Saturated fat has given all fat a bad name, as it has been linked with raising cholesterol levels and heart disease. Only half the fat in beef and lamb is saturated, and within that saturated fat, the majority is a type now known not to affect cholesterol levels.

Mediterranean influence

The other half of the fat is mainly monounsaturated, as in olive oil. Olive oil has become the most recognised source of monounsaturated fat, made popular by the low levels of heart disease seen in Southern European countries, where use of olive oil is frequent and plentiful. In New Zealand we derive more of our monounsaturated fat from beef and lamb than from olive oil.



Meaty fish oils

The small amount of polyunsaturated fat in beef and lamb contains the same healthy oils as those found in some fish and fish oil supplements. These oils are needed by those with heart problems, and for eye and brain development in babies. Levels of these important oils are higher in New Zealand beef and lamb, produced from grass-fed animals, compared to grain-fed animals overseas.

How much comes from beef and lamb?

In the last national nutrition survey, beef and lamb gave us only 8% of our total fat, and 8% of our saturated fat. Sausages and processed meats

added only another 5% to both total and saturated fat. Lean beef and lamb contain less than a fifth of the fat in other protein foods such as cheese or nuts.



Below is a table giving the comparative values of grams of fat in a variety of foods commonly eaten in the New Zealand diet.

	grams fat/100g cooked weight	grams fat per serving
Baked snapper, 1 fillet	3.4	3.6
Lean roast beef topside, 2 slices	5.3	4.4
Lean grilled rump steak, 160g	5.5	8.8
Lean stewed mince, 1 cup	6.0	10.2
Grilled chicken drumstick, no skin x 2	6.8	6.0
Lean grilled lamb leg steak	7.8	4.5
Boiled egg	11.1	5.4
Roasted chicken thigh with skin	19.8	23.5
Canned corned beef, 2 slices	28.4	16.0
Cheddar cheese, ½ cup grated	35.2	20.8
Peanuts, ½ cup, raw	49.0	38.2

A significant amount of lean beef and lamb contains less than 4% saturated fat and qualifies for the Heart Foundation's 'Tick'. The New Zealand Beef and Lamb Quality Mark seen on packs of meat also indicates it is low in fat. Look out for both these symbols when buying beef and lamb.



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Low fat cooking tips using beef and lamb

- Trim visible fat off beef and lamb, either before or after cooking.
- Use leaner cuts of meat such as steaks, stir-fry strips and lean mince.
- Cook without the addition of fat, using methods such as grilling, stir-frying or roasting on a rack.
- When using mince, dry fry in the pan first and drain off any fat. Alternatively, boil mince in hot water, then drain and discard the fat and water. This can also be done with brisket and stewing steak for casseroles or boil-ups.
- If using canned corned beef, heat the unopened can in hot water, then open the can and discard the liquid fat.
- Always enjoy plenty of vegetables with meals using beef and lamb.

Meal comparisons

Small changes to the way food is prepared and cooked can make significant changes to its fat content. For example:

	Lasagne, chips, salad and mayonnaise: 1010kcal (4242kJ), 68g fat		Untrimmed steak, fried chips, onion rings: 776kcal (3259kJ), 33g fat
	Lasagne (with lean mince, yoghurt, low fat cheese), baked potato and salad: 762kcal (3200kJ), 19g fat		Trimmed steak, oven chips, peas and grilled tomato: 555kcal (2331kJ), 15g fat

Low fat snack meal ideas

- Steak fingers – grill, fry or barbecue beef or lamb and cut into small shapes or fingers. Serve with cucumber and yoghurt dip or as part of a platter with fruit and raw vegetables – eg carrot, celery, cucumber, cherry tomatoes and red capsicum.
 - Sandwich of left-over lean roast beef or lamb with tomato, grated carrot, celery and capsicum.
 - Mini pita pockets filled with cooked mince or chopped cold meat and salad – eg grated carrot, lettuce, chopped cucumber and tomato.
 - Jacket potato filled with mince or chilli, served with salad.
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Low fat recipes using beef and lamb

Beef Steaks with Warm Vegetable & Couscous Salad

Ingredients (Serves 4)

4 beef steaks, (fillet, sirloin or rump),
trimmed
1-2 Tbsp olive oil
Salt, pepper and pinch of garlic powder
1 cup boiling water or stock
1 cup couscous
1 red onion, peeled and sliced*

8 mushrooms, sliced*
1 red capsicum, sliced*
¾ cup vinaigrette
Chopped parsley to taste
2 Tbsp pesto
* Or use your favourite seasonal vegetables

Method

Pour the water or stock over the couscous, fluff with a fork to separate the grains and stand 5-10 mins.

Rub oil on the steaks and season with salt, pepper and garlic powder, then lightly oil the vegetables. Heat a BBQ or heavy-based pan and cook steaks 3-5 mins per side or until cooked to your liking. Set aside in a warm place to rest, and BBQ or grill the vegetables.

Fluff the couscous again and add vegetables, vinaigrette, parsley and pesto. Serve with the steaks.



Mince Wraps

Ingredients (Serves 4-6)

350g lean beef or lamb mince
1 Tbsp olive oil
1 onion, peeled and finely chopped
1 Tbsp tomato paste
1 x 375g jar salsa (mild, medium or hot)

½ 400g tin Mexican-spiced tomatoes
1 450g tin refried beans
6-8 soft flour tortillas
1 cup grated edam cheese

Method

Heat oil in a pan and cook the onion for 1-2 mins, then add the mince, stirring until browned. Drain off excess liquid and add tomato paste, salsa and tomatoes and simmer gently a further 20 mins.

Allow to cool and mix in the beans. Divide the mince between the tortillas and sprinkle with grated cheese.

Fold the bottom over the mince, roll up tightly sideways and secure with a toothpick. Grill in a preheated oven until hot through. Serve with seasonal vegetables or a green salad.



Beef or Lamb Stir-fry

Ingredients (Serves 4)

500g lean beef or lamb for stir-frying
Dash oil
2 tsp minced garlic
1 tsp minced ginger
1 onion, peeled and thinly sliced

2 cups of your favourite prepared
seasonal vegetables
2 spring onions, finely sliced (optional)
100g mung bean sprouts (optional)
2 Tbsp sweet chilli sauce

Method

Heat the oil in a frying pan or wok and brown the beef or lamb in 2-3 batches over a high heat. Do not overcook.

Remove from the pan and cook the garlic, ginger and onion for 1-2 minutes. Add the vegetables and stir-fry until crisp and tender

Return the beef or lamb to the pan with the spring onions and bean sprouts if using, and add the sweet chilli sauce. Toss well until hot through and serve with noodles or rice.



Lamb Chops with Mash & Vegetables

Ingredients (Serves 4)

4-6 lamb loin chops, cutlets or leg
steaks, trimmed
2 Tbsp oil
3-4 Tbsp seeded mustard
2 Tbsp chopped fresh herbs (parsley,
chives, thyme)
Salt and pepper to taste

4-5 large floury potatoes, peeled and
chopped
Margarine and milk to mash
3 large carrots, peeled and thickly sliced
1 cup peas
Chopped chives (optional)

Method

Rub the lamb with oil, mustard and herbs, season with salt and pepper.

Brown the lamb on both sides over a moderate heat, then transfer to a preheated 180°C oven until cooked to your liking.

Cook the potatoes in boiling salted water until tender. Drain, then add a teaspoon of margarine and a little milk and mash. Season to taste. Blanch carrots and peas in boiling water until tender. Drain, season with salt and pepper and sprinkle over the chives.



Frequently asked questions

1. **How much meat should we eat?**

New Zealanders eat beef and lamb in amounts well within national and international food and nutrition guidelines. Because lean beef and lamb are so nutritious, they are an important part of your daily, healthy lifestyle.

2. **Can I eat red meat if I have a high cholesterol level?**

Yes, lean beef and lamb are low in fat, but also contain some of the important oils found in olive and fish oils. The Heart Foundation states women can include 100-150g of lean meat and men 150-200g of lean meat in their diet per day.



3. **Does eating red meat help me lose weight?**

Lean red meat is low in fat and an important part of a healthy diet for everyone, including those trying to lose weight. All the good nutrition is found in the lean part of meat, so trimming the fat takes nothing away except the extra calories. It is also packed with good quality protein, keeping you feeling full and satisfied for longer, helping you to eat less.

Beef + Lamb. Feel Twice as Good.

Lean beef and lamb can be described as nature's power pack, containing many important nutrients, such as iron, zinc, B vitamins, protein and vitamin D. Beef and lamb are part of Kiwi culture, making us feel good for many reasons. Packed full of nutrients, essential to our health and wellbeing, they are national favourites we can simply feel good about eating.

For more information about red meat and health, and/or recipes, please contact:
Beef and Lamb New Zealand,
PO Box 33-648, Takapuna, Auckland.
Freephone 0800 733 466
or visit www.beeflambnz.co.nz



Health problems may result from an inadequate or inappropriate diet. They may also have a medical basis unrelated to diet. The information in this booklet is only general and is not to be taken as a substitute for medical advice in relation to specific symptoms or health concerns.

Acknowledgement: Meat & Livestock Commission, UK.

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