



The  
HEALTHY  
Alternative to  
Trans Fats

# EAT FAT LOSE FAT

“If permanently losing weight while improving your health is a real goal of yours, I highly recommend this book.”

—DR. JOSEPH MERCOLA, bestselling author of *The No-Grain Diet*

DR. MARY ENIG,  
INTERNATIONAL EXPERT ON FATS  
AND SALLY FALLON,  
PRESIDENT, THE WESTON A. PRICE FOUNDATION

## **Eat Fat, Lose Fat**

**Also by Sally Fallon and Dr. Mary Enig**

*Nourishing Traditions:*

*The Cookbook That Challenges Politically Correct Nutrition*

*and the Diet Dictocrats*

# **Eat Fat, Lose Fat**

**Lose Weight and Feel Great with Three Delicious, Science-Based Coconut Diets**

**Dr. Mary Enig and Sally Fallon**



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## **Part One**

### **The Truth About Fats**

# Chapter One

## Facts Versus Fears About Fats

### America's Anti-Fat Obsession

As the French maintain their trim physiques while consuming triple cream brie, steak au poivre, and béarnaise sauce, most American adults would barely dare to drink a glass of whole-fat milk. For the last 25 years, government recommendations, medical doctrine, food advertising, and so-called health experts have stressed low-fat and non-fat foods, cautioning people to avoid fats in general, particularly saturated fats from animal products and tropical fats, like coconut.

“Are you eating lots of foods high in fat (especially saturated fat) ?” worries the American Heart Association website. “Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol,” echo the current (2000) United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) food guidelines. A scant two to three daily servings of dairy or other animal foods—specified to be “low-fat or fat-free”—are recommended in the Food Pyramid (developed by the USDA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute website offers “heart healthy recipes” with reduced fat content, such as Stuffed Potatoes made with soft margarine, low-fat cottage cheese, and low-fat milk.

Yet America, not France, is the nation with galloping rates of obesity, leading many people, and now many researchers, to wonder:

- Are the vegetable oils and trans fats contained in processed foods really healthier than the fats in natural foods, like butter and cream?
- Is coconut oil, a staple in countries with lower rates of chronic disease than ours, really so deadly?

How effective have the recommended low-fat diets and low-and non-fat foods really been, given that 97 million Americans (that's 64 percent, an 8.6 percent jump from 1994 to 1999) are overweight, according to a study published in the October

2002 *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

And weight gain is not just a question of appearance. Obesity was number two on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention list of preventable causes of death in 2004 (after smoking). According to government statistics, being overweight substantially increases the risk of hypertension, type II diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, and respiratory problems, as well as endometrial, breast, prostate, and colon cancers. Higher body weight increases mortality for all causes.

If you are among the overweight and want to avoid these diseases, you're caught in a vicious cycle. Once the pounds pack on, your energy plummets, making it harder to exercise. Even if you only need to lose a few pounds, or are not overweight at all, you may find that you suffer from low energy, chronic fatigue, food cravings, and depression. Why?

Based upon our collective experience—Dr. Mary Enig is a world-renowned biochemist and nutritionist, best known for her pioneering research on healthy fats and oils and her early protests against trans fats, and Sally Fallon is a food industry researcher, chef, and president and cofounder of the Weston A. Price Foundation—we believe that while you may be overweight, you are also likely to be *undernourished*, lacking vital nutrients that your body derives from fat. In this book, we offer you a dietary program that, depending on your needs, will help you lose weight (or gain weight if you need to), recover from debilitating health disorders, enhance your overall health and, last but not least, introduce you to a whole world of satisfying, delicious, wholesome foods that everyone in your family can enjoy.

Our three diet plans—Quick and Easy Weight Loss, Health Recovery, and Everyday Gourmet—are all based on eating adequate amounts of good, *healthy fat*, especially the valuable saturated fat of the coconut. Think “healthy fat” is a contradiction in terms? Read on.

### **Are You Fat Deficient?**

Dutifully following the anti-fat recommendations, many people are mystified when they get results contrary to those they're led to expect. For example:

- Have you relied on fat-free foods and counted fat grams to lose weight, only to find that your weight has plateaued and you always feel hungry?
- Do you avoid red meats, butter, and eggs to lower your cholesterol, but lack sufficient energy to get through the day?
- Do you eat margarine because of a family history of heart disease, but feel listless and depressed?
- Do you eat so-called healthy meals (like a salad with no-fat dressing), only to be overtaken by cravings that drive you to eat fatty foods, such as chips, french fries, doughnuts, or ice cream?

Or perhaps, like so many Americans, you suffer from one or more of these symptoms:

- Has your weight slowly been creeping up?
- Is it impossible to lose that last ten pounds no matter how hard you try?
- Have your energy and enthusiasm drooped?
- Do you still feel hungry after you've finished your meal?
- Do you crave fried foods, sweets, and sugary snacks?
- Do you experience a mid-afternoon "energy crash" and need caffeine or sweets to get through the rest of the day?
- Do sharp cravings for fattening foods overwhelm your best intentions to eat healthy, whole foods?
- Do you feel too fatigued to exercise, though you know you should?
- Do you blame yourself for your lack of "willpower"?
- Are you resigned to weight gain and fatigue?
- Do you suffer from a chronic illness like depression, chronic fatigue syndrome, hypothyroidism, digestive problems, or hormonal imbalances?

Every single one of these problems can signify a dietary fat deficiency. Instead of resulting in weight loss as promised, eating a low-fat diet can spark food cravings that lead to overeating. Instead of making you healthy, avoiding healthy fats can actually undermine your health because you *need* fats for countless bodily functions.

Creamy sauces, buttered vegetables, and ice cream taste good for a reason. It's not that your body is trying to torment you by making unhealthy foods seem delectable. Instead, your body is using your taste buds to signal what you need. That's why most of us enjoy rich foods, like succulent lamb chops, berries with heavy cream, and crispy turkey skin. But because we believe that fats are bad, *we are afraid to listen to our bodies.*

In fact, rich, delicious foods are nature's gift to us, in contrast to processed foods, the creations of the food industry. And helping people understand, prepare, and enjoy wholesome foods is the mission of the Weston A. Price Foundation. With 200 chapters around the world, the Foundation has helped thousands of people find their way to health and optimal weight while enjoying a wholesome, traditional foods diet.

### **Eat Fat to Lose Weight?**

Our Eat Fat, Lose Fat program will put you back on the track that nature intended for efficient nourishment. Let go of the notion that you must suffer to lose weight. In fact, starving yourself is counterproductive, since it signals the body to *hold on* to fat. Instead, when you eat sufficient quantities of the right combinations of fats (as outlined in our recipes and menu plans), you'll notice that you can go for hours without eating and without experiencing cravings, because your body is satisfied and your blood sugar is stable. As a result, hunger pangs disappear and eating sensibly becomes easy!

Nutritional satisfaction signals your body that food is abundant, so it *releases* fat stores. This is the key to weight loss—but that's not all. On this diet, you'll be taking in good fats and over time releasing bad ones from your system. It's like upgrading to premium fuel. Efficient functioning and better health will result.

Through our work at the Weston A. Price Foundation, we've heard from hundreds of people who not only lost lots of weight but also healed a wide range of health problems precisely by following the eating programs that we're offering you in this book. Throughout the book, you'll find some of their stories in the sidebars. Though we've changed names and details to protect their privacy, the actual weight-loss and healing experiences described are all very real.

Along with other healthy fats, coconut oil is key to this diet. Saturated fats, such as those found in coconut oil, butter, cream, and red meat, can be good for you, as you'll learn throughout our book. And, among all the sources of saturated fat available, coconut is the most readily absorbed and utilized—not to mention the most likely to help you lose weight, which is why coconut is the cornerstone of the three dietary plans you will find in the following chapters.

Both of us bring many years of work in the field of nutrition to the eating program offered here. Aside from being one of the world's most renowned nutritional scientists, Dr. Enig is the author of the highly regarded professional publication *Know Your Fats* (Bethesda Press, 2000), dubbed the "fat information bible" by Dr. Joseph Mercola, author of the bestseller *The No-Grain Diet* (Dutton, 2004). In the course of studying, lecturing, and teaching around the world for the last 20 years, Mary has both contributed to and kept abreast of all the scientific and medical literature on fats, and she became an early and articulate critic of the harmful type of fats we now know as trans fats. Against much opposition (as you'll see in Chapter 3), she began pushing for including the percentage of trans fats on nutrition labels decades ago. Mary is president of the Maryland Nutritionists Association and was recently honored by the American College of Nutrition for her pioneering work in calling attention to the dangers of trans fats.

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### **Janet's Story: Feeling Full**

Our **Yogurt-Coconut Smoothie** (for recipe) contains energy-boosting coconut oil and whole-milk yogurt, but when Janet went to prepare it she had neither on hand, so instead she used the low-fat yogurt she found in the fridge. An hour after eating the smoothie, Janet felt hungry and ate a “second breakfast” of French toast and syrup (loaded with high-fructose corn syrup). Good-bye, diet!

The next time Janet prepared the smoothie, she used whole-milk yogurt and added the 2 tablespoons of coconut oil that the recipe called for. Janet felt full after eating only half a serving. When lunchtime came, she didn't feel hungry. She finally ate the second half of the smoothie at 2 p.m. and experienced no desire for food until evening, when she ate a light but deliciously satisfying dinner of grilled chicken with skin, brown rice cooked in coconut milk, and vegetables with butter.

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As founding president of the Weston A. Price Foundation, Sally is a major spokesperson for wholesome nutrition. She travels the world, lecturing and teaching on healthy nutrition and traditional cuisine to thousands of people. We have also coauthored numerous articles on the complex subject of diet and health for various health publications.

Most recently, we have championed the use of coconut oil and other coconut foods. Mary has investigated the metabolism-enhancing properties of coconut oil, which contains special medium-chain fatty acids (MCFAs) shown to boost metabolism and stimulate weight loss, according to research carried out in France, Italy, Canada, Japan, and the United States over the past 14 years (Chapter 4 will go into this research in more depth). Meanwhile, Sally has applied her outstanding culinary skills to the discovery of many varied and wonderful ways to enjoy coconut, which you will experience yourself through the many traditional and coconut-based recipes from around the world featured in this book.

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### **Satiation: The Key to Weight Loss**

When you consistently use coconut oil (along with other healthy fats), you provide vital nourishment to every cell in your body, nourishment that supports optimal function of your nerves, brain, hormones, immune system, and metabolism. But beyond that, you trigger a powerful mechanism that is key to success in permanent weight loss: *satiation*.

How does your body register this? When you eat coconut (and other healthy fats like those found in butter, cream, nuts, meats, and eggs), your body actually produces a hormone in the stomach and small intestine that signals that you've eaten enough. When you feel satiated, cravings, and the persistent hunger you experience on most diets, are banished. An added bonus is that many health problems will resolve themselves and you will have more energy and a more optimistic attitude toward life.

Satiation is a truly revolutionary weight-loss concept. By feeding your body the

healthy fats it needs, you won't feel hungry, you won't need to deny yourself, and you won't even *want* to overeat empty calories from foods like pizza, sodas, or commercially produced ice cream (which often contains gums, additives, and vegetable oils that negate the benefits of consuming cream).

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We know...you've heard that saturated fats are unhealthy. Who hasn't? Read on and you'll be surprised to learn about research published during the last 20 years in respected scientific and medical journals, like *The Journal of Lipid Research*, *Reviews in Pure and Applied Pharmacological Science*, and *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, that shows that *just the opposite is true*. Your body needs not only fats, but *saturated fats*, to nourish your brain, heart, nerves, hormones and every single cell. Saturated fats form a key part of the cell membranes throughout your body. When you eat too many unsaturated fats, the kind found in polyunsaturated vegetable oils, these fats adversely affect the chemistry of those membranes.

How does this affect *you*? Overstocked with the *wrong* kinds of fats, and lacking sufficient quantities of the *right* kinds of fats to create healthy cells, your body becomes nutritionally deprived, and a host of health problems ensue. Your energy drops, your nerves don't fire efficiently, glands malfunction, your hormones and metabolism head south. With cells weakened from lack of necessary nutrition, weight loss is an uphill battle. Exactly what 95 percent of dieters have experienced up until now. You're tired, you're always hungry, *and* you gain weight!

Yet, for many people, the idea that your body *needs* fat seems hard to accept, when fat is what you're trying to lose. If you have flab under your arms, cellulite on your thighs, and a stomach that enters the room ahead of you, can you still be fat deprived? Yes! The fact is that your body's visible fat stores do not necessarily result from fat consumption. Nor do they indicate adequate levels of fat-derived nutrients. You could be 200 pounds overweight and still be undernourished and fat deprived.

### **Three Kinds of Fats**

While most other diet plans tell you to leave certain foods *out* of your diet—such as fat, dairy, grains, meat, salt, or desserts—the Eat Fat, Lose Fat plan tells you how to *include* all these foods in your diet, exploring the science behind your need for them, how to choose healthy versions of them, and how to prepare them for maximum nutrient benefit and digestibility.

In order to understand how such a diet works, you need to know the differences among the three basic types of fats found in food. Then, you must be aware of the dangers of trans fat: an artificially produced fat found widely in processed and packaged foods.

Fats (also called lipids) are a class of organic substances that do not dissolve in water. They are composed of chains of carbon atoms with hydrogen atoms filling the available bonds and are called fatty *acids* because of their structure. Despite that terminology, they don't behave like acids in the way that water-soluble acids such as vinegar do.

## ***Saturated Fats***

Found predominantly in animal fats and tropical oils like coconut oil and in lesser amounts in all vegetable oils (and also made within your body, usually from excess carbohydrates), saturated fats are structured so that all available carbon bonds are occupied by a hydrogen atom, which makes them highly stable and also straight in shape, so that they are solid or semisolid fat at room temperature. As a result of their unique composition, they are less likely to go rancid when heated during cooking and form dangerous free radicals that can cause a litany of ills, including heart disease and cancer.

## ***Monounsaturated Fats***

The monounsaturated fatty acid most commonly found in our food is oleic acid, the main component of olive oil and sesame oil, as well as the oil in almonds, pecans, cashews, peanuts, and avocados. Your body can also make monounsaturated fatty acids from saturated fatty acids when it needs them for various bodily functions.

Chemically, monounsaturated fatty acids are structured with one double bond (composed of two carbon atoms double-bonded to each other). Because this bond causes the molecule to bend slightly, these fats do not pack together as easily as saturated fats, so they tend to be liquid at room temperature but become solid when refrigerated.

Like saturated fats, however, monounsaturated oils are relatively stable. They do not go rancid easily and hence can also be used in cooking.

## ***Polyunsaturated Fats***

Polyunsaturated fatty acids have two or more double bonds. The two polyunsaturated fatty acids found most frequently in our foods are linoleic acid with two double bonds (called omega-6) and linolenic acid, with three double bonds (called omega-3). (The omega number indicates the position of the first double bond.)

Because your body cannot make these fatty acids, they are called “essential” and must be obtained from foods. Polyunsaturated fatty acids have bends or turns at the position of the double bonds and hence do not pack together easily. They remain liquid, even when refrigerated.

Unpaired electrons located at the double bonds make these oils highly reactive. When they are subjected to heat or oxygen, as in extraction, processing, and cooking, free radicals are formed. It is these free radicals, not saturated fats, that can initiate cancer and heart disease. As such, industrially processed polyunsaturated oils, such as corn, safflower, soy, and sunflower oils, should be strictly avoided.

## **The Dangers of Trans Fats**

Manufactured foods, such as baked goods, some frozen foods, margarine, chips,

fast-food fries and countless other products, contain rearranged fatty acids called trans fats, which are produced artificially by bombarding polyunsaturated oils with hydrogen, a process called partial hydrogenation. This process makes the normally twisty polyunsaturated fatty acids straighten out and behave like saturated fats in foods. As a result, trans fats have a longer shelf life. They pack together easily so they are unnaturally solid at room temperature and can be used as spreads and shortenings. Because they can be made so cheaply and because their inclusion helps packaged foods to last nearly forever, the food industry prefers to use trans fats made from cheap soy, canola, corn, or cottonseed oil rather than more expensive animal fats or tropical oils.

For years, as you will read in Chapter 2, medical experts, government agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration, and medical organizations such as the American Heart Association (AHA) urged Americans to abandon traditional saturated fats in favor of partially hydrogenated oils in order to reduce the risk of heart disease. These organizations boosted margarine, for example, as healthier for the heart than butter.

Yet a large body of scientific research now demonstrates what Mary Enig's work showed long before the medical establishment was willing to acknowledge the facts: that these altered fats, which people are still told to eat to reduce their cholesterol levels, actually *increase* cholesterol and also the risk for heart disease. For example, the Nurses' Health Study, a long-term study of over 80,000 female nurses carried out by researchers at Harvard University, reported that substituting 30 calories of trans fats each day for 30 calories of carbohydrates increased the risk of heart disease by a factor of nearly two. The director of the study, Dr. Walter Willett, professor of nutrition and epidemiology at the Harvard School of Public Health, claimed that saturated fats also increased the risk, although much less; but other commentators on the overall study, such as J. Salmeron in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 2001, found no correlation between consumption of saturated fats and heart disease.

Trans fats also compromise many bodily functions, including hormone synthesis, immune function, insulin metabolism, and tissue repair. What's more, they promote weight gain. In fact, a person whose dietary fats are mostly trans fats is likely to weigh more than a person who does not consume trans fats, even if their caloric intake is the same. (One type of trans fat, called an isomer, occurs in small amounts in butter, beef, and lamb fat. But this isomer does not cause health problems. It is actually converted into a substance called CLA, which protects against weight gain.)

In 2002, the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences concluded that there is *no* safe level of trans fat in the diet. In 2004, an FDA advisory panel concluded that trans fat is "even more harmful than saturated fat." (Actually, as we saw, saturated fats are not harmful.) Dr. Willett commented, "When partially hydrogenated vegetable oil was first used in foods many decades ago, it was considered safe. Now that studies have demonstrated that partially hydrogenated oil is a major cause of heart disease, it should be phased out of the food supply as rapidly as possible and replaced with more healthful oils."

In Chapter 3, we'll provide more details of how trans fats are detrimental to every system in your body.

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## Does This Product Contain Trans Fats?

You might assume that it's easy to avoid trans fats by reading nutritional labels on the food products you buy—but you'd be wrong. Until 2003, manufacturers were not required to list the trans fat content of foods on the label. That year, the FDA finalized a requirement that all food labels list trans fat content by January 1, 2006.

This regulation has led many food manufacturers to reduce or eliminate the amount of trans fats in their products. Frito-Lay, for example, no longer uses partially hydrogenated oils in most of its products. Kraft Foods has said it will reduce trans fat levels. Some smaller companies are moving in the same direction. Unfortunately, these manufacturers still are not using healthy, stable saturated fats, such as coconut oil, palm oil, lard, butterfat, or tallow (beef or sheep fat), and when they do use palm or coconut oil, it is usually also partially hydrogenated for a longer shelf life. Instead, they are primarily using liquid vegetable oils, which can also cause health problems, especially when consumed in large amounts or heated to high temperatures, as in frying.

The labeling requirement won't help you identify trans fats in restaurant meals, and most fast-food chains continue to use partially hydrogenated oils to fry foods. But not to worry: once you've begun eating wholesome, traditional foods, the idea of fast food won't tempt you in the slightest.

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## The Scientific Turnaround on Fat

Today, more physicians are beginning to admit that the anti-fat campaign hasn't won the health-and-weight-loss war. Dr. Frank Hu, also of the Harvard School of Public Health, cautioned that “the *exclusive focus on dietary fat has been a distraction* in efforts to control obesity...” (our italics). Speaking to the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC), which is preparing the revised USDA Food Pyramid for 2005, Dr. Hu pointed out, “Conventional wisdom holds that the more fat you eat, the more likely you are to become obese. However, *the evidence does not support the conventional wisdom...*” He cited 16 long-term studies (6 to 18 months in duration) that showed “no evidence that a low-fat diet is more beneficial.”

What's more, recent studies confirm that healthy fat consumption *promotes* sustainable weight loss (something we've been saying for years!). “Studies conducted in the past three years have found a moderately high-fat diet...to be more beneficial (than low-fat diets) in terms of adherence, weight loss, and weight maintenance, while also reducing cardiovascular risk factors,” Dr. Hu affirmed.

With this new evidence, government and medical authorities will begin to readjust their dietary guidelines to include more fat. Yet they still subscribe to the false notion that saturated fats are bad, so the most prominent fats in the new food guidelines will be liquid vegetable oils, including soy, canola, and safflower, in spite of considerable evidence that a diet including only liquid fats can lead to serious health problems, including heart disease and cancer.

In *Eat Fat, Lose Fat*, we give you the straight story of what science says about the kinds of fats you should mostly be eating.

Healthy fats include omega-3 fatty acids (found in cod-liver oil, egg yolks, and flax oil), medium-chain fats (found in coconut oil, palm kernel oil, and butter), and long-chain saturated fats (found mostly in meat and dairy products). They'll help you lose weight, increase your energy, boost your immunity to illness, and optimize your digestion.

So the real, scientific way to lose fat is to eat fat—especially the fats you'll learn more about in this book.

*Eat Fat, Lose Fat* will take you beyond your fears about fat, to the facts about fat. The diet programs and menu plans in Chapters 6, 7, and 8 are based on Dr. Enig's pioneering work, in which she has courageously moved beyond prevailing assumptions and prejudices about fats to penetrate to the truth about how different fats affect us—a truth that the medical establishment is only beginning to understand. We'll lay out several strands of evidence to clear up prevailing misunderstandings about fats and their role in human health:

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## A Closer Look at How Overweight Happens

Eating excess calories is only one reason for overweight. Listed below are the factors most commonly responsible for fat buildup, and how the Eat Fat, Lose Fat program addresses each one:

**High-calorie, nutrient-empty foods:** When you get all the healthy fats (and allied nutrients) that your body needs, you'll eliminate cravings that lead you to foods like soda, cookies, and breads.

**Low thyroid function:** When your thyroid is sluggish, you can't lose weight no matter how little you eat. On our program, you'll enhance thyroid function and upgrade your metabolism by consuming energy-boosting, thyroid-supporting coconut oil.

**Excess sugar and carb consumption and insulin sensitivity** (a condition in which your cells cannot process blood sugar properly): Emphasizing nutrient-rich protein, dairy, and vegetables, you'll bypass excess consumption of weight-inducing and insulin-activating sugars and grains.

**Consumption of renegade fats** such as trans fats: You'll cut out all trans fats, which interfere with numerous biochemical processes in the body and can contribute to weight gain.

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- **Historical:** World populations on four continents, subsisting on the coconut and other natural, wholesome foods (without heart disease, weight gain, or other chronic illnesses), provide the world's longest epidemiological