

Parent Communications— Fats in Foods

Optional e-mail message: Use this sample message to communicate with parents by e-mail (if available). This message can also be adapted for use in your organization's publications, such as a newsletter article. Be sure to include the credit "Provided by Harvard Prevention Research Center on Nutrition and Physical Activity and YMCA of the USA."

Subject Line: Healthy Habits Power Tips— Go for Healthy Fats!

Dear (insert school name and grade) Parents:

This week for the *Eat Well & Keep Moving* program, the (school name and grade) will be doing several fun activities with your children that will teach them about fat in foods. Our key messages will be the following:

- ▶ The type of fat in the foods you eat is more important than the total amount.
- ▶ Eat “good for you” fats found in fish and plant sources like vegetable oils (such as olive and canola), nuts, and seeds.
- ▶ Limit foods high in saturated fats, such as butter, many dairy products, and red meat.
- ▶ Avoid foods with trans fats, which can be found in fast food, packaged baked goods like cookies and muffins, stick margarine, and any food with “partially hydrogenated vegetable oil” or “shortening” in the ingredients list.

Use these Healthy Habits Power Tips to help you select and prepare foods with healthy fats. Pick one tip that you want to try right away and go for it!

- ▶ **Minimize fast food eating.** Foods served in fast food restaurants are often high in unhealthy saturated and trans fats.
- ▶ **Read labels when you purchase foods to avoid products with trans fat.** Look for 0g trans fat AND read the ingredients to avoid foods with “partially hydrogenated vegetable oils.” Many manufacturers are reducing or eliminating them from their products.
- ▶ **Cook with healthy oils** (high in unsaturated fat), not butter (high in saturated fat), stick margarine, shortening, or lard (all high in trans fat). To learn more about choosing foods with healthy fats visit www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/fats-and-cholesterol-1/.

From L.W.Y. Cheung, H. Dart, S. Kalin, B. Otis, and S.L. Gortmaker, 2016, *Eat Well & Keep Moving*, 3rd ed. (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics). Adapted, by permission, from *Food & Fun After School 2nd Edition Parent Communications*. ©2013 President and Fellows of Harvard College.