

## Is Saturated Fat Bad – Answers to Common Questions

**Dr. Andreas Eenfeldt:** Is saturated fat bad?

**Dr. Naiman:** Yes, saturated fat is extremely deadly, and that is why there is so much of it in breast milk, in human breast milk. You can tell it's bad for you, because it's in breast milk, that's right.

**Dr. Andreas Eenfeldt:** So, I take it, you don't really believe that?

**Dr. Naiman:** No, not at all.

**Dr. Andreas Eenfeldt:** So, what will you say? Is it, what, good, bad, neutral?

**Dr. Naiman:** I think saturated fat is perfectly good and I like to look at everything through an evolutionary lens. And I've done a lot of research into comparative gut anatomy and physiology of humans versus other animals.

And if you look at what humans eat, it's pretty obvious that we've had saturated fat our entire existence and this has to be optimum nutrition for us. So, we did not become the dominant species on this planet because saturated fat was bad for us.

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**Dr. Andreas Eenfeldt:** Is saturated fat dangerous?

**Dr. Brukner:** No, absolutely not. I mean, I think there is very clear that there have been three or four meta analysis, structured reviews of all the literature and I think even the US Dietary Guidelines people are saying that, you know, these things are not so bad anymore.

So, you know, I think it's very clear now that there was a horrible mistake when we demonized the saturated fat and the cost of that to humanity is immeasurable. But, I think it's very clear that saturated fat is not dangerous, I mean, probably in excess is, but an excess of anything is probably dangerous. But saturated fat in moderation is perfectly okay.

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**Dr. Andreas Eenfeldt:** Saturated fat... is it really bad for you?

**Dr. Fung:** I think this has been one of the biggest myths and this has been propagated for many years. We've been afraid of saturated fats, total fats, but in particular saturated fats for years. And I think that originally there was a lot of confusion between naturally saturated fats and trans fats.

Trans fats are artificially saturated fats, often called partially hydrogenated oils. And the thing is those artificial man-made saturated fats were actually very bad for you, those trans fats and we've recognized that and nobody will argue that.

Trans fats are bad, but it kind of gives saturated fats a very bad name, as well. And if you go back, more recent studies in the last say five years, have really shown that the number of saturated fats you eat, really has no correlation to heart disease, that people who eat a lot of saturated fat, don't get more heart disease.

And this was always the biggest worry, this is what people always said, "Oh, you are eating so much red meat, which has saturated fat. Well, you are going to clog up your arteries and die." That's not what actually happens and if you look back, there really has been no evidence that that is true at all.

If you think about it, of course, it makes no sense. That is... There are lots of naturally saturated fats. Coconut oil, for example and a lot of animal products are saturated fats. Do you really think that the foods that our ancestors ate really were going to kill us?

Well, if that was the truth, then, none of us would be sitting here today, because people eat lots of saturated fats. Right? If you think about lard for example, what many people used was pig fat, which is lard, and lots of saturated fats.

They did fine, there's very little obesity, they didn't have any heart disease and they did fine. So, these are natural foods. Saturated fats are in a lot of natural foods. And if it didn't kill us in the last 2000 years, it's not likely that they're going to kill us just in the last 30 years. Right?

So, it's been a big myth and it's been one of the very bad things that we've told people is that "It's bad for you, that you have to avoid it." It's simply not true.

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**Dr. Andreas Eenfeldt:** Is saturated fat dangerous?

**Dr. Shanahan:** Uh, I'm not going to answer that, because, thinking that saturated fat is either good or bad is the problem. So, when we started getting into trouble, is when we started talking about our food like we were chemists.

What we really need to pay attention to is "Where did our food come from? "How healthy was the place that it came from? "Was it a factory farm? Was it a nice little biodynamic farm?" and then "What was done to it?"

Those are the things that people talked about for thousands and thousands of years and that's what kept us out of trouble. When we got into trouble, is when we started paying attention to things like saturated fat.

If we look at the saturated fat content of the food and try to judge whether we should buy it or not, you have to know a lot of other stuff like how to know, "Okay, well, is it margarine?", because that has a lot of saturated fat, but it's bad for you. Right?

So, it depends really what it is. So, you shouldn't care about saturated fat? You shouldn't even, you know, bother looking at, if there is saturated fat in the food or not?

Well, my answer is... When people ask me what's a good fat, what I say is, "Nature doesn't make bad fats, factories do." So, if we are getting our fat from a factory, it's not going to be good, no matter what it's got in there.

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**Dr. Andreas Eenfeldt:** Is saturated fat dangerous?

**Dr. Westman:** I don't think so. The research that implicated saturated fat, that then led to governments and organizations getting on line, telling everyone to avoid saturated fat, the research was really kind of weak or poor, but, you know it was the research that we had at the time, so, in today's light of how we do research it's just, wouldn't hold muster to say saturated fat is bad or unhealthy.

And I think that generally is changing now. Several papers came out over the last few years, at least the research world is understanding that saturated fat is probably not harmful.

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**Dr. Andreas Eenfeldt:** Is saturated fat dangerous?

**Dr. Chatterjee:** Look, I think it's been well documented now that there's no association between saturated fat intake and cardiovascular disease. Now, what does that mean for patients?

If we are talking about patients with type 2 diabetes, with abdominal obesity, with insulin resistance, which is the majority of patients I see, actually I'm more worried about refined

and processed carbohydrates. It's not that I'm saying, "Eat as much saturated fat as you want."

I'm just saying, "Look, for you, for the way your body is at the moment, your problem is refined and processed carbohydrates. Let's not worry about the other things." That's the way I manage this with my patients.