

Good evening fellow toastmasters and most welcome guests. I would like to talk to you today about fats and try to answer the question: Are fats good? Or are they bad?

Specifically, I would like to take a look at two types of fats: trans-fats and omega-3 fats. These two fats have been particularly hot on the news lately and I wanted to take a look into whether these reports were based on truth or myth.

Lets first take a look at trans-fatty acids or trans-fats. I think that the majority of us have heard quite a lot on the news about trans-fat being bad for your health, but how bad is it actually?

Consider this: Nutritional scientist Bruce Holub says studies show just 5 grams a day of trans fat over many years boosts the heart disease risk by 25 per cent. Margarine has 2.8 grams of trans fat per tablespoon. A medium order of fries contain 14.5 grams of trans-fats. The KFC meal contained a whopping 18.6 grams. At that level, if eaten daily, it could boost the risk of heart disease, by almost 100 per cent. Several decades of research show that eating trans-fats can promote heart disease, diabetes, obesity and even reproductive problems. Clearly, eating too much trans-fats can increase your risk of leading a shorter life.

Although trans-fats have been proven bad for your health, not all fats are bad. Take for example, essential fatty acids. These are called essential fatty acids because the body cannot produce these fatty acids itself – it must be consumed in the diet. One type of essential fatty acid is omega-3. Omega-3 and other fatty acids perform vital functions in the body. They help support [cholesterol](#) metabolism, regulate visual and nerve function, promote skin and hair health, and form hormone-like substances that are involved in inflammation and pain. Healthy women who reported eating fish (a known source of omega-3 fatty acids) at least five times a week had a 45-percent lower risk of dying of heart disease. It is obvious to see that we not only need omega-3 fatty acids for our body, it can also help lower the risk of coronary heart disease as claimed by the FDA.

At the beginning, I wanted to know whether fats were good or bad. The answer: it depends. There are some fats that are bad, for example, trans-fats. There are some fats that are good, such as omega-3. What does this mean for our diet? This means we should try to reduce consumption of bad fats such as trans-fats. Less fast foods, less deep fried foods, and using vegetable oil to cook will all help in reducing trans-fats. On the flip side, we should increase our consumption of foods with known sources of omega-3 fatty acids such as fish and seafood in general. Less fast foods and more seafood? Sign me up.