



MARGARINE VS BUTTER

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With so many margarines in supermarkets it's becoming harder to identify which products are right for you and your health. Nutrition Australia has created this fact sheet to help take the confusion out of shopping for margarines.

Margarine vs Butter

People become confused when faced with the choice of whether to purchase butter or margarine. Butter is high in saturated fats and when consumed in excess amounts it can increase LDL (BAD) cholesterol levels, thus increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Margarines are made up of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats which help to increase HDL (GOOD) cholesterol and potentially reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Plant Sterols

Plant sterols have been shown to lower cholesterol by 10%, through a mechanism in which they block the bodies' ability to absorb cholesterol. In order to maximise the benefit obtained from plant sterols, 2-3g should be consumed daily. This corresponds to 1-1.5 tablespoons of plant based sterol margarine. Consuming more than this amount will confer no additional benefit with regard to an effect on lowering cholesterol. So too, if less than this amount is consumed, no benefit will result.

For best results, plants sterols should be consumed in conjunction with a healthy diet that is balanced with physical activity.

What to look for

Choose margarines that are low in saturated fats and high in polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats.

What to avoid

Avoid trans fats – always look for margarines with the lowest levels of trans fats. Trans fats are 'bad fats' that raise LDL cholesterol levels in the blood. They can be created during the manufacturing of some table margarines. Check the labels of all margarines you buy, to make sure they contain less than 1% trans fat.