

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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Love that Fried Food

Some people just love their fried foods – fried fish, fried chicken, fried okra, fried anything. Hey, we just had the State Fair here. That's fried Twinkies, fried butter and fried candy bars! Some love fried food to the point that they don't even want to talk to a dietitian because "I know what she's going to say!" And they don't want to risk being told to stop eating what they love. Okay, so how about I just suggest you fry with different oil. Will you consider that?

Actually that's the main point of some recent research. In many cases it's not the frying itself that is as bad as what kind of fat the food was fried in and how it was fried. So maybe there is a way you can keep both your taste buds and your heart happy (and your doctor's dietitian too!)

All fats have about the same number of calories in a teaspoon, or a cup. There's a little bit of difference when you talk about butter for example. That's because it still has water in it. The water is what sizzles when you drop it in a hot pan. Light butter, light margarine and whipped margarine also often have water beaten into them to reduce the calories. Still, no matter what kind of fat you use, plenty of it will end up on your hips.

But here's where the similarities end. There are different kinds of fats that make up butter and oils. Solid fats like butter are mostly saturated. Liquid fats, or oils, are mostly unsaturated. *Trans* fats are mostly made when we turn oils into solids. Not only do they look different, they act differently in our bodies and our bodies use them differently. So there are different health recommendations for each type.

Trans fats are generally agreed to be the worst. Most of them are so unhealthy that the FDA intends to get them out of our foods as much as possible in the next couple of years. People who eat lots of foods with *trans* fats usually have more heart problems, more of some cancers, more hardening of the arteries. So stay away from them. They're mostly in processed foods, baked goods, and cake or cookie mixes.

Saturated fats, the Solid ones, have been the next to come under the 'bad guy' label. It seems that when we don't do enough exercise to burn off all the saturated fats we eat, our livers turn them

into cholesterol. And when we have too much of this home-made cholesterol, it gets parked in our arteries. Our blood pressure goes up too. Butter and lard are saturated fats, as are palm oil and palm kernel oil. You don't usually see those in bottles on the grocery shelf, but they're in the boxes of cookies and crackers, mixes and processed foods. And yes, they are often what we use to fry foods.

Unsaturated fats are liquid oils. Corn, soy, peanut, canola, safflower and olive oils are mostly unsaturated. They are used differently by our bodies. And they do not raise our risks of heart attacks or hardened arteries. They can help our immune systems.

So, if you're going to fry, use liquid oils. Olive oil tends to burn faster, so use it just for quick sautés, not frying the turkey. And with all oils, the less you reuse them the better. High heat can make oils break down. If they start to darken or get sticky, pitch them. That much change is not good for us. And try to use less oil to fry. You can get a fried flavor with just a little oil in the pan, instead of an inch. Heat the oil to the right temperature. Oil that's not hot enough, or too deep, will soak into the food more.

So fry if you must, but be smart about it. Use oils, not solid fats. Use less oil, fresh oil, hot oil. And enjoy the flavor with a healthier heart.

Here's a quick recipe for two Florida foods, scallops and tomatoes. Enjoy!

Baked Scallops and Tomatoes

1 pound fresh or frozen scallops	3 large ripe tomatoes
1/8 tsp ground black pepper	2 tsp celery salt
2 tsp Worcestershire sauce	2 Tbsp oil
¾ cup (3 oz) shredded cheese, Cheddar or Mozzarella	

Thaw frozen scallops. Preheat oven to 450°F. Grease 7x11-inch baking dish. Cut large scallops in half and put in bowl. Wash tomatoes and slice crosswise into 4 slices. Arrange tomatoes in baking dish. Sprinkle with pepper. Mix celery salt, Worcestershire sauce and oil in bowl with scallops and toss to coat. Spoon scallops over tomatoes. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake 15-20 minutes until scallops are tender and cheese is lightly browned. Serves 6.

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