

Nourishing Traditions:

The Cookbook That Challenges Politically Correct Nutrition

and the Diet Dictocrats

Eat Fat, Lose Fat

Lose Weight and Feel Great with Three Delicious, Science-Based Coconut Diets

Dr. Mary Enig and Sally Fallon



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Part One

The Truth About Fats

Chapter One

Facts Versus Fears About Fats

America's Anti-Fat Obsession

As the French maintain their trim physiques while consuming triple cream brie, steak au poivre, and béarnaise sauce, most American adults would barely dare to drink a glass of whole-fat milk. For the last 25 years, government recommendations, medical doctrine, food advertising, and so-called health experts have stressed low-fat and non-fat foods, cautioning people to avoid fats in general, particularly saturated fats from animal products and tropical fats, like coconut.

“Are you eating lots of foods high in fat (especially saturated fat) ?” worries the American Heart Association website. “Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol,” echo the current (2000) United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) food guidelines. A scant two to three daily servings of dairy or other animal foods—specified to be “low-fat or fat-free”—are recommended in the Food Pyramid (developed by the USDA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services). The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute website offers “heart healthy recipes” with reduced fat content, such as Stuffed Potatoes made with soft margarine, low-fat cottage cheese, and low-fat milk.

Yet America, not France, is the nation with galloping rates of obesity, leading many people, and now many researchers, to wonder:

- Are the vegetable oils and trans fats contained in processed foods really healthier than the fats in natural foods, like butter and cream?
- Is coconut oil, a staple in countries with lower rates of chronic disease than ours, really so deadly?

How effective have the recommended low-fat diets and low-and non-fat foods really been, given that 97 million Americans (that's 64 percent, an 8.6 percent jump from 1994 to 1999) are overweight according to a study published in the October 2002 *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

And weight gain is not just a question of appearance. Obesity was number two on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention list of preventable causes of death in 2004 (after smoking). According to government statistics, being overweight substantially increases the risk of hypertension, type II diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, and respiratory problems, as well as endometrial, breast, prostate, and colon cancers. Higher body weight increases mortality for all causes.

all causes.

If you are among the overweight and want to avoid these diseases, you're caught in a vicious cycle. Once the pounds pack on, your energy plummets, making it harder to exercise. Even if you only need to lose a few pounds, or are not overweight at all, you may find that you suffer from low energy, chronic fatigue, food cravings, and depression. Why?

Based upon our collective experience—Dr. Mary Enig is a world-renowned biochemist and nutritionist, best known for her pioneering research on healthy fats and oils and her early protests against trans fats, and Sally Fallon is a food industry researcher, chef, and president and cofounder of the Weston A. Price Foundation—we believe that while you may be overweight, you are also likely to be *undernourished*, lacking vital nutrients that your body derives from fat. In this book, we offer you a dietary program that, depending on your needs, will help you lose weight (or gain weight if you need to), recover from debilitating health disorders, enhance your overall health and, last but not least, introduce you to a whole world of satisfying, delicious, wholesome foods that everyone in your family can enjoy.

Our three diet plans—Quick and Easy Weight Loss, Health Recovery, and Everyday Gourmet—are all based on eating adequate amounts of good, *healthy fat*, especially the valuable saturated fat of the coconut. Think “healthy fat” is a contradiction in terms? Read on.

Are You Fat Deficient?

Dutifully following the anti-fat recommendations, many people are mystified when they get results contrary to those they're led to expect. For example:

- Have you relied on fat-free foods and counted fat grams to lose weight, only to find that your weight has plateaued and you always feel hungry?
- Do you avoid red meats, butter, and eggs to lower your cholesterol, but lack sufficient energy to get through the day?
- Do you eat margarine because of a family history of heart disease, but feel listless and depressed?
- Do you eat so-called healthy meals (like a salad with no-fat dressing), only to be overtaken by cravings that drive you to eat fatty foods, such as chips, french fries, doughnuts, or ice cream?

Or perhaps, like so many Americans, you suffer from one or more of these symptoms:

- Has your weight slowly been creeping up?
- Is it impossible to lose that last ten pounds no matter how hard you try?
- Have your energy and enthusiasm drooped?
- Do you still feel hungry after you've finished your meal?
- Do you crave fried foods, sweets, and sugary snacks?
- Do you experience a mid-afternoon “energy crash” and need caffeine or sweets to get through the rest of the day?
- Do sharp cravings for fattening foods overwhelm your best intentions to eat healthy, whole foods?
- Do you feel too fatigued to exercise, though you know you should?

- Do you feel too fatigued to exercise, though you know you should?
 - Do you blame yourself for your lack of “willpower”?
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- Are you resigned to weight gain and fatigue?
 - Do you suffer from a chronic illness like depression, chronic fatigue syndrome, hypothyroidism, digestive problems, or hormonal imbalances?

Every single one of these problems can signify a dietary fat deficiency. Instead of resulting in weight loss as promised, eating a low-fat diet can spark food cravings that lead to overeating. Instead of making you healthy, avoiding healthy fats can actually undermine your health because you *need* fats for countless bodily functions.

Creamy sauces, buttered vegetables, and ice cream taste good for a reason. It's not that your body is trying to torment you by making unhealthy foods seem delectable. Instead, your body is using your taste buds to signal what you need. That's why most of us enjoy rich foods, like succulent lamb chops, berries with heavy cream, and crispy turkey skin. But because we believe that fats are bad, *we are afraid to listen to our bodies.*

In fact, rich, delicious foods are nature's gift to us, in contrast to processed foods, the creations of the food industry. And helping people understand, prepare, and enjoy wholesome foods is the mission of the Weston A. Price Foundation. With 200 chapters around the world, the Foundation has helped thousands of people find their way to health and optimal weight while enjoying a wholesome, traditional foods diet.

Eat Fat to Lose Weight?

Our Eat Fat, Lose Fat program will put you back on the track that nature intended for efficient nourishment. Let go of the notion that you must suffer to lose weight. In fact, starving yourself is

starvation. Let go of the notion that you must starve to lose weight. In fact, starving yourself is counterproductive, since it signals the body to *hold on* to fat. Instead, when you eat sufficient quantities of the right combinations of fats (as outlined in our recipes and menu plans), you'll notice that you can go for hours without eating and without experiencing cravings, because your body is satisfied and your blood sugar is stable. As a result, hunger pangs disappear and eating sensibly becomes easy!

Nutritional satisfaction signals your body that food is abundant, so it *releases* fat stores. This is the key to weight loss—but that's not all. On this diet, you'll be taking in good fats and over time releasing bad ones from your system. It's like upgrading to premium fuel. Efficient functioning and better health will result.

Through our work at the Weston A. Price Foundation, we've heard from hundreds of people who not only lost lots of weight but also healed a wide range of health problems precisely by following the eating programs that we're offering you in this book. Throughout the book, you'll find some of their stories in the sidebars. Though we've changed names and details to protect their privacy, the actual weight-loss and healing experiences described are all very real.

Along with other healthy fats, coconut oil is key to this diet. Saturated fats, such as those found in coconut oil, butter, cream, and red meat, can be good for you, as you'll learn throughout our book. And, among all the sources of saturated fat available, coconut is the most readily absorbed and utilized—not to mention the most likely to help you lose weight, which is why coconut is the cornerstone of the three dietary plans you will find in the following chapters.

Both of us bring many years of work in the field of nutrition to the eating program offered here. Aside from being one of the world's most renowned nutritional scientists, Dr. Enig is the author of the highly regarded professional publication *Know Your Fats* (Bethesda Press, 2000), dubbed the “fat information bible” by Dr. Joseph Mercola, author of the bestseller *The No-Grain Diet* (Dutton, 2004). In the course of studying, lecturing, and teaching around the world for the last 20 years, Mary has both contributed to and kept abreast of all the scientific and medical literature on fats, and she became an early and articulate critic of the harmful type of fats we now know as trans fats. Against much opposition (as you'll see in Chapter 3), she began pushing for including the percentage of trans fats on nutrition labels decades ago. Mary is president of the Maryland Nutritionists Association and was recently honored by the American College of Nutrition for her pioneering work in calling attention to the dangers of trans fats.

Janet's Story: Feeling Full

Our **Yogurt-Coconut Smoothie** (for recipe) contains energy-boosting coconut oil and whole-milk yogurt, but when Janet went to prepare it she had neither on hand, so instead she used the low-fat yogurt she found in the fridge. An hour after eating the smoothie, Janet felt hungry and ate a “second breakfast” of French toast and syrup (loaded with high-fructose corn syrup). Good-bye, diet!

The next time Janet prepared the smoothie, she used whole-milk yogurt and added the 2 tablespoons of coconut oil that the recipe called for. Janet felt full after eating only half a serving. When lunchtime came, she didn't feel hungry. She finally ate the second half of the smoothie at 2 p.m. and experienced no desire for food until evening, when she ate a light but deliciously satisfying dinner of grilled chicken with skin, brown rice cooked in coconut milk, and vegetables with butter.

~~As founding president of the Weston A. Price Foundation, Sally is a major spokesperson for wholesome nutrition. She travels the world, lecturing and teaching on healthy nutrition and traditional cuisine to thousands of people. We have also coauthored numerous articles on the complex subject of diet and health for various health publications.~~

Most recently, we have championed the use of coconut oil and other coconut foods. Mary has investigated the metabolism-enhancing properties of coconut oil, which contains special medium-chain fatty acids (MCFAs) shown to boost metabolism and stimulate weight loss, according to research carried out in France, Italy, Canada, Japan, and the United States over the past 14 years (Chapter 4 will go into this research in more depth). Meanwhile, Sally has applied her outstanding culinary skills to the discovery of many varied and wonderful ways to enjoy coconut, which you will experience yourself through the many traditional and coconut-based recipes from around the world featured in this book.

Satiation: The Key to Weight Loss

When you consistently use coconut oil (along with other healthy fats), you provide vital nourishment to every cell in your body, nourishment that supports optimal function of your nerves, brain, hormones, immune system, and metabolism. But beyond that, you trigger a powerful mechanism that is key to success in permanent weight loss: *satiation*.

How does your body register this? When you eat coconut (and other healthy fats like those found in butter, cream, nuts, meats, and eggs), your body actually produces a hormone in the stomach and small intestine that signals that you've eaten enough. When you feel satiated, cravings, and the persistent hunger you experience on most diets, are banished. An added bonus is that many health problems will resolve themselves and you will have more energy and a more optimistic attitude toward life.

Satiation is a truly revolutionary weight-loss concept. By feeding your body the healthy fats it needs, you won't feel hungry, you won't need to deny yourself, and you won't even *want* to overeat empty calories from foods like pizza, sodas, or commercially produced ice cream (which often contains gums, additives, and vegetable oils that negate the benefits of consuming cream).

We know...you've heard that saturated fats are unhealthy. Who hasn't? Read on and you'll be surprised to learn about research published during the last 20 years in respected scientific and medical journals, like *The Journal of Lipid Research*, *Reviews in Pure and Applied Pharmacological Science*, and *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, that shows that *just the opposite is true*. Your body needs not only fats, but *saturated fats*, to nourish your brain, heart, nerves, hormones and every single cell. Saturated fats form a key part of the cell membranes throughout your body. When you eat too many unsaturated fats, the kind found in polyunsaturated vegetable oils, these fats adversely affect the chemistry of those membranes.

How does this affect *you*? Overstocked with the *wrong* kinds of fats, and lacking sufficient quantities of the *right* kinds of fats to create healthy cells, your body becomes nutritionally deprived, and a host of health problems ensue. Your energy drops, your nerves don't fire efficiently, glands malfunction, your hormones and metabolism head south. With cells weakened from lack of necessary

malfunction, your hormones and metabolism head south. With cells weakened from lack of necessary nutrition, weight loss is an uphill battle. Exactly what 95 percent of dieters have experienced up until now. You're tired, you're always hungry, *and* you gain weight!

Yet, for many people, the idea that your body *needs* fat seems hard to accept, when fat is what you're trying to lose. If you have flab under your arms, cellulite on your thighs, and a stomach that enters the room ahead of you, can you still be fat deprived? Yes! The fact is that your body's visible fat stores do not necessarily result from fat consumption. Nor do they indicate adequate levels of fat-derived nutrients. You could be 200 pounds overweight and still be undernourished and fat deprived.

Three Kinds of Fats

While most other diet plans tell you to leave certain foods *out* of your diet—such as fat, dairy, grains, meat, salt, or desserts—the Eat Fat, Lose Fat plan tells you how to *include* all these foods in your diet, exploring the science behind your need for them, how to choose healthy versions of them, and how to prepare them for maximum nutrient benefit and digestibility.

In order to understand how such a diet works, you need to know the differences among the three basic types of fats found in food. Then, you must be aware of the dangers of trans fat: an artificially produced fat found widely in processed and packaged foods.

Fats (also called lipids) are a class of organic substances that do not dissolve in water. They are composed of chains of carbon atoms with hydrogen atoms filling the available bonds and are called fatty *acids* because of their structure. Despite that terminology, they don't behave like acids in the way that water-soluble acids such as vinegar do.

Saturated Fats

Found predominantly in animal fats and tropical oils like coconut oil and in lesser amounts in all vegetable oils (and also made within your body, usually from excess carbohydrates), saturated fats are structured so that all available carbon bonds are occupied by a hydrogen atom, which makes them highly stable and also straight in shape, so that they are solid or semisolid fat at room temperature. As a result of their unique composition, they are less likely to go rancid when heated during cooking and do not form dangerous free radicals that can cause a litany of ills, including heart disease and cancer.

Monounsaturated Fats

The monounsaturated fatty acid most commonly found in our food is oleic acid, the main component of olive oil and sesame oil, as well as the oil in almonds, pecans, cashews, peanuts, and avocados. Your body can also make monounsaturated fatty acids from saturated fatty acids when it needs them for various bodily functions.

Chemically, monounsaturated fatty acids are structured with one double bond (composed of two carbon atoms double-bonded to each other). Because this bond causes the molecule to bend slightly, these fats do not pack together as easily as saturated fats, so they tend to be liquid at room temperature but become solid when refrigerated.

Like saturated fats, however, monounsaturated oils are relatively stable. They do not go rancid easily and hence can also be used in cooking.

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