

Fat Gram Recommendations

To calculate the grams of fat you should eat each day to facilitate weight loss while staying healthy, take 20 and 35 percent of your total calorie needs—as recommended by the Institute of Medicine-- and divide by nine, since fat provides nine calories per gram. For example, you'd need to eat 22 to 39 grams of fat when consuming a 1,000-calorie diet, 27 to 47 grams when following a 1,200-calorie meal plan, 31 to 54 grams when consuming 1,400 calories and 36 to 62 grams of fat each day when consuming a 1,600-calorie weight loss diet.

First, you need to know how many calories you should eat each day. Once you know this, you can determine how many grams of fat and saturated fat you can eat without exceeding your limits for fat. These limits are 25% to 35% of calories from fat and less than 7% of calories from saturated fat.

Here are some general guidelines for the number of calories that may be right for you if you don't need to lose weight:

Less-active women and older adults: 1,600 calories

Most children, teen girls, active women, and less-active men: 2,200 calories

Teen boys, active men, and very active women: 2,800 calories

If you need to lose weight, you may need fewer calories. Your doctor or dietician can set an appropriate calorie level for you. After you know how many calories you should have each day, you can use the chart below to determine how much total fat and saturated fat you can eat each day. Remember, these are average figures. This means if you have a day when you eat foods that are high in fat, you can balance it by eating fewer high-fat foods the next day. This idea is sometimes called fat budgeting. Also, these figures are for healthy adults. If you have heart disease, your doctor may want you to reduce your fat intake even further.

Here's how to use the chart. Look down the left-hand column until you find the total number of calories you should eat each day. When you find the right amount, look across to see:

How many of your calories you can get from fat

How many grams of fat this equals

How many of your calories you can get from saturated fat

How many grams of saturated fat this equals

How Much Fat Can I Eat?

Your Total Daily Calories	Recommended Maximum Calories from Fat	Recommended Maximum Grams of Fat*	Recommended Maximum Calories from Saturated Fat**	Recommended Maximum Grams of Saturated Fat
1,600	400 to 560	44 to 62	112 or less	12 or less
1,800	450 to 630	50 to 70	126 or less	14 or less
2,000	500 to 700	56 to 78	140 or less	16 or less
2,200	550 to 770	61 to 86	154 or less	17 or less
2,400	600 to 840	67 to 93	168 or less	19 or less
2,600	650 to 910	72 to 101	182 or less	20 or less
2,800	700 to 980	78 to 109	196 or less	22 or less

*By following this, you will get the recommended 25% to 35% or less of your calories from fat.

**By following this, you will get the recommended less than 7% of your calories from saturated fat.

After you know your limits, try this experiment:

Write down your limits.

During the day, read your food labels to see how many grams of fat and saturated fat you are getting. Remember, food labels tell how many grams are in one serving as defined on the food label. If you eat a smaller or larger serving, then you're eating fewer or more grams of fat. Write down the amounts of fat and saturated fat from each of your meals and snacks. At the end of the day, add up the amounts to get a total for fat and a total for saturated fat. Repeat this experiment for several days, then look at your totals. Are you at or below your limits on most days? If so, you're doing well. If not, you need to try to cut some fat and saturated fat from your diet. You don't need to add up your actual fat intake every day of your life. But it's a good idea to do this when you begin making diet changes so you know where you are at the outset. This will also help you become more aware of serving sizes. Then do it again every few months as you make changes to see whether you're eating habits are really improving.