



You Butter Believe It

Written by Jill Grunewald and published in mix magazine, January 2011



Butter. The thought of this delicacy might make some folks gasp in horror, as conventional nutritional advice has browbeat many folks into believing that butter (and other naturally-occurring fats) will make us fat and clog our arteries. Butter lovers rejoice, as this is simply not true.

Butter is a partially saturated fat made from cream or whole milk and is a natural product, not one concocted in a lab. It is only as good as the milk that goes into it, and the best butter comes from cream or milk from sustainably- and humanely-raised livestock and organic and sustainable farms that reject the use of growth hormones and subtherapeutic antibiotics (as supplements or feed additives).

Many of these farms also raise their animals on grass vs. grain, which offers us even healthier food due to the high Omega-3 fatty acid content, beta-carotene (an antioxidant), and conjugated linoleic acid (CLA - a fatty acid that is a reported cancer fighter) that the grass provides.

Butter is Better

According to the Real Milk campaign, a project of The Weston A. Price Foundation (an organization that promotes access to unprocessed whole milk products from pasture-fed animals and campaigns for a return to healthy, traditional fats), “Back in the 20s, Americans could buy fresh raw whole milk, real clabber and buttermilk, luscious naturally yellow butter, fresh farm cheeses and cream in various colors and thicknesses. Today’s milk is accused of causing everything from allergies to heart disease to cancer, but when Americans could buy Real Milk, these diseases were rare. In fact, a supply of high quality dairy products was considered vital to American security and the economic well being of the nation.”

Butter’s benefits:

- Rich in fatty acids, which boost metabolism, fight pathogens, and support immune function
- Rich in iodine, manganese, zinc, chromium, copper, and selenium (a powerful antioxidant)
- Rich in vitamin A
- A good source of vitamins E, D, and K
- Unpasteurized butter possesses a hormone that prevents joint stiffness and arthritis
- Butter from grassfed cows contains high levels of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), which helps build muscle mass, inhibits fat storage, and protects against cancer
- Butter from grassfed cows provides a perfect balance of Omega-3 and Omega-6 essential fatty acids

Fat: Fear Not

For years, I have joyfully sung the praises of full fat foods, which is typically met with a pregnant pause, one raised eyebrow, a chuckle, or all three. Saturated fats and cholesterol have been vilified

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for 30 years, but the truth is, they're essential for good health and a necessary component of every cell in your body. Fat is also a wonderful source of energy and this is why our bodies are designed to store it easily. It is what helps us feel full and satisfied.

Saturated fat does not raise cholesterol levels and cholesterol is not the major culprit in heart disease. Shocking, I know. These facts have been proven for decades, but mainstream medicine continues to heavily endorse low fat diets and the multi-billion dollar statin drug industry.

If you shun cholesterol, you may be eating too many carbohydrates and sugars, forcing your liver to overproduce cholesterol to take up the slack. Until you enjoy some moderate amounts of cholesterol-rich foods, including luscious butter, this valve doesn't shut off. Consequently, a carbohydrate-rich diet can actually lead to high cholesterol.

According to Dr. Mary Enig, Ph.D. and nutritionist and biochemist internationally renown for her research on the nutritional aspects of fats and oils, "Cholesterol acts as a precursor to vital corticosteroids, hormones that help us deal with stress and protect the body against heart disease and cancer; and to the sex hormones like androgen, testosterone, estrogen, and progesterone. Cholesterol is a precursor to vitamin D, a very important fat-soluble vitamin needed for healthy bones and nervous system, proper growth, mineral metabolism, muscle tone, insulin production, reproduction and immune system function."

Accept No Substitutes

The food industry has put forth a valiant effort to create "healthy" alternatives to butter, including margarine, which is one molecule away from being plastic. Don't eat it! These highly processed spreads have only proven to dilute the taste of our food and cause a myriad of health problems, including hormonal imbalances, skin diseases, heart disease, cancer, infertility, and learning disabilities in children.

According to Ann Louise Gittleman, Ph.D., Clinical Nutritionist and Certified Nutritional Specialist, "Now we know that the artificial and manipulated fats in margarine and hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated vegetable oils are far more dangerous to the human body. Hydrogenation (the manufacturing process of adding hydrogen to oils to solidify them) produces unnatural trans fats that are biochemically incompatible with the human body, and have no business being used as food."

Ghee Whiz

Ghee (pronounced gē), also known as clarified butter, has some unique properties all its own that are certainly worth mentioning. Made by heating butter and skimming the foam off, ghee is one of the finest cooking oils on the planet. It boosts the nutritional value of other foods and is the best way to use butter in stir-frying and sautéing.

According to Ayurvedic tradition, ghee supports physical and mental renewal and possesses healing properties not found in other fats. It balances hormones, promotes strong resistance to disease, and is essential for longevity. With all of these benefits, it's tempting to drink it.

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