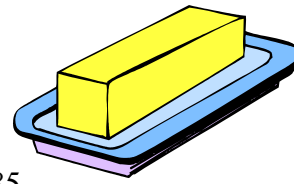


Butter vs. Margarine

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Have you noticed all of the nutrition claims on your favorite margarine label? Why? After a rocky start to a butter substitute, margarine spent a couple of decades basking in its image as a healthy alternative to butter. Then came the news that margarine's *trans* fat may be even worse than butter's saturated fat, which sent millions of consumers back to butter.

Before you head back to butter, consider the dozens of margarines that are low in artery-clogging fat. Here's what to look for.

- ♥ Saturated fat is very hard on the heart. To help lower the saturated fat in your diet, try to find a margarine that contains less than one gram of saturated fat per serving.

- ♥ Use the soft rule- generally speaking, the softer the margarine, the lower the saturated fat. Light and reduced margarines contain less fat and thus less saturated fat.

- ♥ Trans fats have been proven to increase the risk of developing heart disease by elevating bad cholesterol (LDL) and decreasing good cholesterol (HDL). To decrease the trans fat in your diet, choose trans fat free margarines. Many labels say "trans fat free". Some margarines that are trans-free include Brummel and Brown, Parkay Squeeze, I Can't Believe It's Not Butter Light, Smart Balance, all Promise margarines, Take Control and Benecol.

- ♥ If you are trying to reduce your cholesterol or lose weight- a great tasting product is "I Can't Believe It's Not Butter Spray". This can be sprayed over vegetables, rice, pasta- anything you normally put butter or margarine on. The taste is great and it is calorie, fat, and sodium free per serving. Keep in mind that it does have oil and sweet cream buttermilk on the label, so if you use more than what is recommended (5 sprays) you will get some fat and calories, so try not to go overboard.

- ♥ To decrease saturated fat when cooking or baking, use regular stick margarine. You can use it in place of all of the butter in a recipe. Using light or low calorie margarines is not recommended because they are not formulated for cooking or baking since they are lower in fat and will not perform the same way as the full-fat margarines.

Adapted from Nutrition Action and Test Kitchen