

# Consuming saturated animal fats increases the risk of type 2 diabetes

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The consumption of butter, which is rich in saturated fatty acids and trans fats, has been related to a high risk of suffering from this disease. Credit: ©URV

Recently, dietary guidelines for the general population have shifted toward a plant-based diet rich in legumes, whole-grain cereals, fruits, vegetables and nuts, and low in animal-based foods like red meat. Increasing evidence is suggesting that plant-based diets are beneficial for health and they also have a lower impact on the environment.

Researchers at the Unit of Human Nutrition of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili (Tarragona-Spain) and international collaborators have evaluated the associations between total and subtypes of [fat intake](#) and the risk of type 2 diabetes. In addition, they have evaluated the relationship between food sources rich in saturated [fatty acids](#) and the incidence of type 2 diabetes.

The study's main findings showed that those participants who consumed higher amounts of saturated fatty acids and animal fat had a twofold higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes than those participants with a lower intake of saturated

and animal fat. The consumption of 12 grams per day of butter was associated with a twofold higher risk of diabetes after 4.5 years of follow-up, whereas the intake of whole-fat yogurt was associated with a lower risk. The present study analyzed data from 3,349 participants in the PREDIMED Study who were free of diabetes at baseline but at high cardiovascular risk. After 4.5 years of follow-up, 266 participants developed diabetes.

This study will be published in the scientific journal *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* in February 2017. According to the researchers, these findings emphasize the healthy benefits of a Mediterranean diet for preventing chronic diseases, particularly type 2 [diabetes](#), and the importance of substituting saturated and animal fats (especially red and processed meat) for those found in vegetable sources such as olive oil and nuts.

**More information:** Marta Guasch-Ferré et al, Total and subtypes of dietary fat intake and risk of type 2 diabetes mellitus in the Prevención con Dieta Mediterránea (PREDIMED) study, *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (2017). [DOI: 10.3945/ajcn.116.142034](https://doi.org/10.3945/ajcn.116.142034)

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