



On-Site Insights

Leading your company and your employees to a life well lived

On-Site SolutionsSM
PHYSICAL THERAPY
Injury Prevention & On-Site Physical Therapy Treatment

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Fried Food Facts

So you've heard many times to avoid fried foods. Do you know why? Is it really that unhealthy? And can frying be healthy at all?

What's so bad?

High fat: food absorbs fats when fried, and more so the longer frying takes place. Certain batters soak up more fat than others. Remember that fat = mega-calories.

High temperatures and long fry times: which changes food chemistry into harmful chemicals, particularly meats like fish and chicken. But even fried potatoes release acrylamide, a carcinogen so worrisome that the food industry in Europe is actively reducing fry times and temperatures for French Fries.

Disease: According to Harvard researchers for every fried meal eaten per week, the risk of getting diabetes and heart disease increases. There are strong links to many types of cancer: It is believed this is due to the release of more "free-radicals" during frying, which causes body cell oxidation – a process that can harm cell health, and increase the processes of atherosclerosis (hardened arteries), cancer, aging and inflammatory processes. Inflammation has direct correlations to pain and inhibits healing.



How can frying be healthier?

1. Cook it yourself – you can control type, temp and freshness of oil.
2. Choose healthier batters: All-purpose flour absorbs more oil than corn meal or rice flour. And batters that use leaveners (baking soda or powder, or carbonated beverages like beer) produce gas bubbles that discourage oil absorption.



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3. Fry at the right temperature (best investment – a digital thermometer): Ideal deep frying temperatures are generally 350°-375°. Lower than 325° and more oil will be absorbed into the food, making for gross, greasy fare. Much higher than 375° and you run the risk of additional oxidation (see #3) in the oil as well as dried out food. Pan frying foods should occur at no higher than 340deg F, and stir frying vegetables: 265-295 degF.
4. Use fresh oil: with each filtration and heating, oil loses integrity and can release more harmful chemicals. And the smoke point gets lower with each use. That's why frying at home tends to be far healthier than restaurant fried foods, where fry-oil is routinely reused.
5. Use the right oils: trans fats have been roundly condemned as a substitute for other fats for frying because of their health-hazared. Fats (oils) that have a low smoke point will release free radicals (cancer-promoting) more readily than those with high smoke points. The smoke point is the temperature that causes oil to start smoking. Here's a list of oil smoke points and Cleveland Clinic's recommended uses:

High (380 degF+ smoke point) – for use in searing, browning and (sparingly) deep frying: Almond, Hazelnut, Sunflower, Light or Refined Olive Oil, (and Palm Oil, but since it's high in saturated fat, palm isn't the best choice).

Medium-High (350 deg F) – use when baking, oven cooking or stir frying: Canola, Grapeseed, Macadamia nut, light virgin Olive oil, Peanut.

Medium (320 deg F) - light sautéing, sauces and low-heat baking: Corn, Hemp, Pumpkin seed, Sesame, Soybean, Safflower, Coconut (Cleveland Clinic cautions against coconut oil, as it's very high in saturated fat and contains lauric acid, a triglyceride that adversely affects blood cholesterol levels).

"No-heat" Oils (DON'T fry or cook with these! Smoke point as low as 225 degF. They're meant for making dressings, dips or marinades): Flaxseed, Wheat germ, Walnut.

What are alternatives?

Baked, broiled, microwaved, steamed, and even boiled are healthier cooking alternatives to frying. Grilling is also better, though charring and smoke from grilling has been associated with cancer risk. Raw and fresh foods are optimal!

