Story summary (130-150 characters (1-2 sentences) describing what the slideshow is covering, including the primary data source.):

DietMenus sought to discover the facts about fat, including the five different types that exist and whether they are beneficial or detrimental to your health.

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(---Slide1---) What to know about the 5 kinds of fats (---1Slide---)

When the American Heart Association issued its first guidelines for how a person should go about leading a heart-healthy dietary lifestyle, it discriminated between the benefits and detriments of saturated and unsaturated fats, and made clear that both fat intake and overall caloric intake have a direct bearing on heart disease. As time went on, the critical and medical consensus began to shift more concretely toward a "fat is bad" mentality, and by the 1960s, food manufacturers were touting the "low-fat" diet as the key to avoiding heart disease, obesity, and a host of other problems. By the 1980s, the benefits of "low-fat" were all but accepted as gospel by society as a whole.

Certainly not all fats are created equal, yet as you age, a healthy level of fat intake becomes more essential in maintaining overall health. Dr. Vasanti Malik, a research scientist at Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health, confirms that regular fat intake is necessary for certain body functions, such as organ protection, cell growth, and nutrient absorption. Additionally, fat intake maintains cholesterol and blood pressure levels. Knowing the difference between which fats are considered healthy and which are not is essential to overall health and wellness.

The thinking with regard to what is and is not a "healthy" amount—or type—of fat has changed in recent years as the scientific and medical communities have performed various studies attempting to qualify the long-held assumption that "fat is bad."

In 1980, the first *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* were released by joint agreement between the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These guidelines are updated every 5 years. A paper published in "Open Heart," the British Cardiovascular Society's official journal, in 2015, however, found that the guidelines as originally published did not provide sufficient evidence to support the claim that cutting saturated fat (long considered the "worst" form of fat) reduced instances of heart disease. Elsewhere, research has demonstrated that saturated fat intake has much less bearing on the development of heart and cardiovascular disease than suspected, or assumed, and more studies continue to re-frame the USDA's position on precisely what type and amount of fat is good for you. In order to understand the types of fat that are present in our food supply, DietMenus outlined what you should know about the five types of fats including the health benefits or risks of each.

(---Slide2---) Monounsaturated fats (---2Slide---)

In order to understand the benefits of monounsaturated fats, you first need to understand the two types of cholesterol. High-density lipoprotein cholesterol, also known as HDL or "good cholesterol" can protect your heart by carrying low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL, also considered "bad cholesterol") from your arteries and to the liver, where it can be converted to energy and waste.

Monounsaturated fats promote healthy cholesterol levels and help reduce LDL levels. This fat can be found in plant sources such as avocados, nuts such as almonds, pecans, and cashews, and various oils, including olive, peanut, canola, and sesame oil. It is also present in chicken, pork, and beef.

In addition to aiding in the reduction of LDL, monounsaturated fats are also a source of Vitamin E, which is an antioxidant that contributes to vision, reproductive, and tissue health. Using oil instead of butter when cooking is an example of how to reduce unhealthy fats in your diet. Another example is snacking on nuts instead of chips or cookies. All fat is relatively high in calories at 9 calories per gram, so while making sure monounsaturated fat makes its way into your diet regularly, it is important to consume any fat in moderation.

(---Slide3---) Polyunsaturated fats (---3Slide---)

Polyunsaturated fats have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, which reduce one's risk for disease. Polyunsaturated fats are essential for brain function and cell growth, blood pressure and blood clotting management, and nervous system response. There are two main types of polyunsaturated fatty acids: omega-3 and omega-6. (Omega-3 fats are discussed below.)

Omega-6 fatty acids help manage blood sugar levels and blood pressure, as well as reduce one's risk for diabetes and heart disease. While the human body can produce nearly all the fatty acid it requires to function, it cannot natively produce linolenic acid, which is a key omega-6 fatty acid. A balanced diet that includes fats includes whole grain carbohydrates, seeds and nuts, and plant oils such as sunflower or corn oil is the only way for the body to get the omega-6 it requires.

(---Slide4---) Omega-3 fats (---4Slide---)

Omega-3 fatty acids are another form of polyunsaturated fat. They aid overall physical function and the body's metabolism. Omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to be good for the heart by reducing the buildup of plaque in the arteries and may help prevent stroke, cancer, the flareup of arthritis, and inflammation.

There are two categories of omega-3 fats; the first consists of EPA and DHA (eicosapentaenoic acid and docosahexaenoic acid), which are generally found in seafood, notably salmon, tuna,

shellfish, and (unpopular though it may be) herring. The other type is alpha-linolenic acid, better known as ALA, which comes from flaxseeds, walnuts, and some vegetable oils. Linseed and canola oils are significant sources of ALA. The USDA's 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015–2020 recommends that adults eat at least 8 ounces of seafood per week in order to get the full spectrum of benefits it provides, including lean protein and polyunsaturated fats.

Omega-3s are also available as dietary supplements. Fish oil supplements contain omega-3 in the EPA and DHA form, whereas flaxseed oil supplements contain ALA.

(---Slide5---) Saturated fats (---5Slide---)

Saturated fats are what's known as "solid fats," because they are usually solid at room temperature. When you see a finely marbled steak at the grocery store, the "white" in the marbling is solid fat. Saturated fats exist natively in animal-based foods, notably beef and pork. Saturated fat has been shown to increase the risk of heart disease due to the build up of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) in the arteries. Alongside this risk comes an additional heightened risk for obesity and stroke.

Saturated fats exist in many processed foods that are widely popular in America, such as pizza, fast food, and fried foods. The USDA's most recent iteration of its Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends limiting saturated fat to no more than 10% of total caloric intake per day, whereas the American Heart Association recommends no more than 6%.

(---Slide6---) Trans fats (---6Slide---)

Trans fat is a manufactured product created by adding hydrogen molecules to vegetable oil, a process known as hydrogenation. So when you see "hydrogenated" on a food label, what that means is the product contains trans fats. One reason trans fats became so prevalent in our food system is that they are inexpensive, accessible, and have a long shelf life. Restaurants with commercial fryers found value in trans fats since it could be reused to deep-fry foods, such as french fries and breaded chicken products. But that's not all—trans fat can and does exist naturally in food products such as milk, butter, and cheese, as well as meat products sourced from ruminant animals (e.g. deer, sheep, and goats).

Trans fat is generally considered to be the unhealthiest of all dietary fats, not for least of which reasons is that it is a prime constituent of foods that generally lead to weight gain, diabetes, and cardiovascular issues, such as foods that are battered and fried, and mixes used for cakes, pies, and other pastries. Trans fat raises LDL (or "bad" cholesterol levels) and lowers HDL ("good" cholesterol).

The world's leading nutritional and research bodies have taken up the fight against trans fat. The USDA's Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that daily trans fat daily intake be as

low as possible without compromising overall nutritional value. As of June 2018, partially hydrogenated oils, or PHOs, can no longer be added to foods, per the U.S. Food & Drug Administration. And The World Health Organization released a strategic action package called REPLACE to eliminate industrially produced trans fats globally by 2023.