



Effective Communication of Dietary Fats: An Exploration of Language

Report of Focus Group Research

Submitted to

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Effective Communication of Dietary Fats

Overview

As a leader in nutrition communications research, the International Food Information Council (IFIC) Foundation continually seeks to create and improve opinion leader tools that can be used to communicate with consumers on a variety of nutrition-related issues. As consumers have increasingly had access to more information via the Internet about health and nutrition, many have found information about dietary fats to be confusing. Language used to communicate about dietary fats (e.g., saturated, unsaturated, omega-3, *trans* fat) has been particularly unclear to consumers.

Research Objectives

The International Food Information Council (IFIC) is exploring new language for communicating with consumers about dietary fats. In particular, IFIC wants to find ways of conveying the positive health aspects of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids. Specifically, the objectives of this focus group research were to:

- Assess current consumer knowledge of fat types and how they fit into the diet;
- Gauge how consumers have interpreted and used information about fats in their own diets and food choices, as well as other family members (spouses, children, etc);
- Thoroughly explore risk perception of dietary fats with consumers;
- Evaluate consumer understanding of the new science that has emerged about dietary fats.

Methodology

A total of four focus groups were conducted in two cities, Chicago, IL (June 21, 2007) and Baltimore, MD (June 27, 2007). In each city, one group was comprised of only men while the other was all female. All focus groups were comprised of 8 to 11 respondents that were somewhat knowledgeable in nutrition and who represented a mixture of:

- Ages (25-54 years old);
- Income levels (\$40,000 to 100,000);
- Education levels (high school, college, no post-graduate);
- Marital and family situations (single, married, kids, etc); and
- Ethnicities.

The focus groups began with a discussion of fats and their role in the diet and then led into several exercises evaluating risk perception of fats. Next, consumers explored facts about fats and discussed how this information affected their perceptions. Finally, consumers explored concepts and ideas intended to help them make food choices that fit their needs.

The screener, discussion guide and handouts used in this research are presented in Appendices A, B and C, respectively.



Executive Summary

- In general, fats are one of the more confusing labeling issues for consumers. While many said they are aware of and recognize common fats labeling and ingredient terms, many said they were not sure if certain fats including monounsaturated and polyunsaturated were “good” or “bad.”
- Women tended to feel guiltier about their fat and food intake than men; however, some men did express guilt about food and fat intake, especially those who have difficulty controlling their weight.
- Many consumers, especially women, associate fat intake with weight control issues. Older men tend to associate fat intake with heart health while younger men were not as concerned about health or nutrition issues. In general, most women do not associate fat intake with their own heart health as men do.
- Most consumers indicated that they understand that saturated fats and *trans* fats are unhealthy. However, many had questions and were uncertain about the healthfulness of polyunsaturated, monounsaturated, omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids.
- While many participants could easily evaluate the healthfulness of higher fat food items (e.g., nuts, ice cream, cheese, etc), many could not assess the healthfulness of different types of fats (e.g., monounsaturated, omega-3, partially hydrogenated, etc).
- To a certain degree, consumers mistrust the information about fats, particularly *trans* fats, that they are getting on food packages. Some expressed skepticism about either the taste or health of foods made to be lower in fat content. Others felt that excluding *trans* fat meant that other less than healthy fats were used in their place.
- While all groups acknowledged the body’s need for fats, most participants felt that the word “fats” brought to mind negative images. For men, fats were linked with health conditions such as heart attacks, obesity, stroke, diabetes, and death. For women, fat was more tied closely to issues of appearance (e.g., ugly, body weight, etc.) although they also thought of health. For both men and women, “oils” were associated with more positive ideas such as cooking and baking, and foods such as peanuts, fish and olives.
- Basic education using a one-page handout that described types of fat and their food sources greatly improved consumers’ confidence and understanding of different types of fats.
- Discussions with consumers revealed that they utilize several types of “moderation” and one size does not fit all; while consumers say moderation is “common sense,” it was apparent that individuals need to find their own ways to be moderate.



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- Types of moderation that were revealed:
 - Steady/routine moderation: moderate in all food choices, most of the time.
 - Special occasion moderation: moderate in food choices except on special occasions.
 - Weekend splurge moderation: moderate all week and “splurge” on the weekends.
 - Meal by meal moderation: *moderate by making up for a high fat meal over the course of the next few meals and/or planning for a high fat meal by eating lower fat before hand.*
 - Other moderation strategies: avoidance/elimination, substitution, portion control, and exercise.
- Men and women both said that they have received most of their information about fats from three sources: doctors, advertising, and television news programs.
- Consumers were quite clear on their thoughts about dietary messaging about fats. They feel that few people listen until there is a problem because the messages are too scary; and positive statements about fats would be a welcome departure from what they have typically heard about fats.
- Many thought a simple symbol (e.g., Pyramid icon on a refrigerator magnet) would help them remember the types of fats.
- Message themes that seemed to resonate:
 - “Fat is necessary for good health.”
 - Consumers thought this message needed to be more specific about what types of fat are necessary for health.
 - “Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are healthier than saturated and *trans* fats.”
 - All four groups said things along the line of “look for the ‘un’” to remember that unsaturated types of fats are healthier than saturated.
 - “Healthier fats keep your heart healthy.”
 - Consumers liked this message but felt that it applied to the entire body not just the heart. In addition, they felt the message should include food examples.
 - “For most people, a moderate fat diet means eating up to 65 grams of fat per day.”
 - Participants thought this message was believable but not very meaningful without food examples to provide perspective.



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- Message themes that were less effective with consumers were:
 - “You can learn more about how much fat you need in your diet by visiting www.mypyramid.gov.”
 - While this was believable and credible, many did not think they would visit this site to learn more.
 - “Balance higher fat foods with lower fat foods.”
 - This concept did not make sense to many consumers. They did not understand how this would make their diets healthier overall since they would still be eating the same amount of fat rather than less fat overall.



Key Findings

Knowledge and Attitudes About Fats

In general, fats are one of the more confusing labeling issues for consumers. When asked to evaluate terms used on either food labels or ingredient statements (see Appendix C, Handout A), some said that they found the protein terms confusing because they didn't recognize terms such as hydrolyzed protein or casein. All recognized the fat labeling and ingredient terms but many said they were not sure if certain fats such as monounsaturated and polyunsaturated were "good" or "bad." In addition, some felt that proteins don't pose a health threat but that the wrong types of fat can be unhealthy.

[Olive oil] is good for your heart, unclogs your arteries.....polyunsaturated fats are better for you. Trans fats are not good for you, cotton seed oil; tropical oils are really bad for you so if you read a cookie label and you see cottonseed oil you would want to put that cookie back. (Baltimore, Female)

I'm the most unclear about what are the good fats and what are the bad fats. I know like trans fats are bad, I know Omega 3 fatty acids are good, I know olive oil is good for you, a lot of the other stuff on there I don't know if it falls into the good fat or the bad fat category. I do know there's a distinction there, I just don't know which ones which on this list. (Baltimore, Male)

If I'm not mistaken everything on the protein list is relatively good for you, it doesn't matter if you're getting soy protein or whey protein, it's still "good for you". But, if you're looking at an ingredients list and trying to determine if this product is all in all healthy or unhealthy the fats are where you could be a 180 degrees wrong in either direction. (Baltimore, Male)

Many consumers, especially women, associate fat intake with weight control issues. Women tended to feel guiltier about their fat and food intake than men; however, some men did express guilt about food and fat intake, especially those who have difficulty with weight control.

You can't eat a lot of fatty foods if you're going to diet....you can't have a lot because there's a lot of calories. (Baltimore, Female)



Older men tend to associate fat intake with heart health while younger men were not as concerned about health or nutrition issues. Some younger men believe that exercise can mitigate the effects of an unhealthy diet and fat intake doesn't matter as much. In general, most women do not associate fat intake with their own heart health as men do.

It all depends on what you do. Like if you're eating all these fatty foods and you're just sitting in front of the TV, I'm active. I play sports. That's what I do. So I'm working out after work. I play sports during the weekend. I play baseball, I play basketball. So it's not going to affect me because I'm still working out.
(Chicago, Male)

Exercise has a huge thing to do with it also. I feel like I can eat whatever I want whenever I want because I'll try and exercise enough where I'm burning that stuff off. I know that a lot of things that I eat aren't good for my arteries and stuff like that but I just sort of push it to the back of my mind and think I'm going to run five miles today so it's okay. (Baltimore, Male)

You can expend a lot of calories because your working out, but I still think bad food still plays on your cholesterol and stuff like that whether you're skinny or not.
(Chicago, Male)

Perceptions About Fats Labeling and Product Composition

To a certain degree, consumers mistrust the information about fats, particularly *trans* fats, that they are getting on food packages. Some expressed skepticism about either the taste or health of foods made to be lower in fat content. Others felt that excluding *trans* fat meant that other less than healthy fats were used in their place.

Because it seems like even though like sometimes something's lower in fat, they just add more sodium or carbs... (Chicago, Female)

*Well, what other fat are they putting in it if it's not called *trans* fat?... Like they're always changing names of things just to say there's no *trans* fat, but it could be a different name, you know.* (Chicago, Female)

*Okay, there's some fat in it, but what kind of fat is it? Is it a healthier fat? You know there's zero *trans* fats in it, so what other fats?* (Chicago, Female)

Basic education using a one-page handout that described types of fat and their food sources greatly improved consumers' confidence and understanding of different types of fats.

*Yeah, when I buy margarine, I get it, I shop on base and you get good prices and the margarine that I use I would have to stop using it. I have to look at another alternative because it has *trans* fats. So I've just got to do something different.*
(Baltimore, Female)



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Health Risk Perceptions About Fats: Foods vs. Types of Fats

While many participants could easily evaluate the healthfulness of higher fat food items (e.g., nuts, ice cream, cheese, etc), many could not assess the healthfulness of different types of fats such as polyunsaturated, monounsaturated, omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, and partially hydrogenated oils. Most consumers indicated that they understand that saturated fats and *trans* fats are unhealthy. However, a few participants expressed confusion about how *trans* fat has been addressed in advertisements.

I question the fats. I don't know what monounsaturated, polyunsaturated, I don't really [know]...(Chicago, Female)

Actually I'm not sure what hydrogenated oils are. (Chicago, Female)

I didn't even know anything about the Omega [fats]. (Chicago, Female)

I put saturated in the 'somewhat healthy', but I have no idea. (Chicago, Female)

Trans fat I really don't understand. I understand saturated fat, but I don't understand why, now they're saying, "Oh now it's no trans fat," and you're eating [fast food], is what I just saw. And so I don't understand that. (Chicago, Female)

Perceptions of Fats vs. Oils

While all groups acknowledged the body's need for fats, most participants felt that the word "fats" brought to mind negative images. For men, fats were linked with health conditions such as heart attacks, obesity, stroke, diabetes, and death. For women, fat was more tied closely to issues of appearance (e.g., ugly, body weight, etc.) although they also thought of health. For both men and women, "oils" were associated with more positive ideas such as cooking and baking, and foods such as peanuts, fish and olives.

Most people don't associate good with fat. You know there are some good ones, but most people don't think, most people think fat is bad. (Chicago, Male)

When a guy says she is fat you want him to be referring to 'phat.' (Baltimore, female)

You know what I think of when I'm eating fats? How much more harder I have to work out at the gym. That's what I think of when I'm eating fats. Because to me fats equals calories and you can work off your fat. So if you want to have fats, you just have to work a little harder to get it off. That's what I think of. (Chicago, Female)

I think the oils are healthier for you. (Chicago, Male)



Information Sources About Fats

Men and women both said that they have received most of their information about fats from three sources: doctors, advertising, and television news programs. While they were not specifically asked about the Internet as a source of information, none volunteered that they have used the web as a source of information about dietary fats.

[I've gotten information] from my doctor. I mean she gave me a whole list, a whole book on this and like I told her, I mean I'm reading this but I'm not getting it. But I try to look at the boxes but...I had to go back to her and say, "Talk English to me." (Chicago, Female)

Advertising I think is very, very strong on fats right now. In the fast food restaurants even they're advertising it. In the products in the store. Everywhere you go there's something about trans fats now. (Chicago, Female)

I feel like I learn most of my stuff from like news programs when they do you know specials on nutrition facts. Along with the marketing. (Chicago, Female)

Awareness and Attitudes About Moderation

Most participants seemed to feel that moderation in food is the key to health. While some felt that avoiding "the most egregious offenders" was the right approach, others thought that finding ways to eat favorite foods helps prevent cravings, overeating, and dissatisfaction with meals.

Exactly, you still have to have some of it because then if you don't you're going to go the next time and get the cookie, instead of eating one you'll eat the whole bag. (Baltimore, Female)

You kind of have to have moderation. You have to have taste yet you have to eat healthy. I think you need to kind weigh that and know what you're doing and research it a little bit. Cook a little bit, spend some time to cook some food for yourself. (Chicago, Male)

Discussions with consumers revealed that they utilize several types of "moderation" and one size does not fit all. While consumers say moderation is "common sense," it was apparent that individuals need to find their own ways to be moderate.



Types of moderation that were discussed included:

- Steady/routine moderation: moderate in all food choices, most of the time.

I had to change my lifestyle completely. You just can't eat bad one day, eat good the next day. You have to eat good all the time. (Chicago, Male)

- Special occasion moderation: moderate in food choices except on special occasions.

Somebody can go out and [say], "You know, I've been lifting, I've been watching my diet, my calorie intake, my fat intake, my protein intake, my carb intake. It's all where it's supposed to be. I have my levels where they need to be, I need to treat myself." And some people could go for one meal and go back on track...(Chicago, Male)

I think that you do things in moderation. It's okay to treat yourself you know to have a fat day. (Chicago, Male)

- Weekend splurge moderation: moderate all week and "splurges" on the weekends.

Eat good during the week and then Sunday have your little cheat day. I started on these different diets but that wasn't making me happy so now I'm just starting to eat healthier during the week and still if I want the cookie I'll have the cookie. Still eat but cut down. Just push yourself away from the table. (Baltimore, Female)

- Meal by meal moderation: moderate by making up for a high fat meal over the course of the next few meals and/or planning for a high fat meal by eating lower fat before hand.

I would have salad and fruit for lunch if I knew I was having a bigger dinner. (Chicago, Female)

There's nothing wrong with that. Going out and having a rib eye steak. Just the next day you can't eat pizza for lunch and a cake for dessert and the day after that eat hotdogs for lunch and bacon and eggs for dessert. You can do that. (Baltimore, Male)



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In addition, there were several other moderation strategies that emerged including avoidance/elimination, substitution, portion control, and exercise.

You can cut it out all the way if you want to. (Baltimore, Female)

You can exercise. (Baltimore, Female)

You could try to find a healthier fat if you could get the same product with the healthier fat. Or like, for macaroni and cheese say, you could try two percent instead of whole milk. Or less fat cheese which sometimes [works]...(Chicago, Female)

I will go with the smaller portions then and just leave it at that. (Chicago, Female)

If you're eating at home you're not eating the same thing every single night so the only way you're going to actually moderate about it is not to put four helpings in front of you and to pay a little bit of attention to what you're buying. (Baltimore, Male)

Importance of Positive Messaging for Dietary Fats

Consumers were quite clear on their thoughts about dietary messaging about fats:

1. Few people listen until there is a problem because the messages are too scary;
2. Positive statements about fats would be a welcome departure from what they have typically heard about fats.

But the problem is, it seems like, that the only people that are being educated is people, it's after the fact. They've had a heart attack, they've had a heart condition, they've had someone in their family die with this disease....What is going to make us more aware and want to change our lifestyle so we prevent that? You know, I think that's what the problem is. We're not educating ourselves because we don't worry about it. We put it off to the side, it's too much work to worry about it. (Chicago, Female)

So all we hear in our society is this is bad. But they don't tell us what's good. They just put a label on it saying low fat. (Chicago, Male)

I've just seen a sign yesterday on the L. It said, "Peanuts, the high-energy food." And they had a picture of a little peanut. Like that was the first time I ever seen an advertisement for a vegetable in like, I don't know how long. So I was glad to see that up there. (Chicago, Male)

You need to educate on that poly and mono stuff. Definitely just like they flooded up with this trans and saturated junk, they need to flood up with that mono and [poly]... (Chicago, Male)



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Thoughts on Effective Education and Advertising

Some thought a simple symbol or a reminder (e.g., Pyramid icon on a refrigerator magnet) would help them remember the types of fats.

What if it was on a package and you had points for every part of the pyramid per product per serving and then you knew how many points you needed to have during the day. (Chicago, Female)

Others thought that people respond best to celebrity role models.

If they come on with some [celebrity], and they're drinking it or eating it, people are going to buy it. It doesn't even matter what's in it, how fat it is....It's America....Stuff sells off advertising period....Until the people who got prominent status in the media or whatever start eating healthy stuff on TV showing young people look, that you can do it...[no one will change]. (Chicago, Male)

Reactions to Messaging Concepts About Fats: Messages that Worked

Message 1: "Fat is necessary for good health."

Overall assessment was that this is credible and true. However, consumers felt that this messages needs to be more specific about what types of fat are necessary for health.

[It would help] if you told them what kind of fat. Like what kind of foods....So if they knew what kind of fats were good for them and necessary for a balanced diet, I think that would help them. Education I think though is a lot. (Chicago, Female)

I'm saying which fat. If you just say fat is necessary, I mean is necessary for good health, they're going to think all fat. You got to tell them which fats are necessary for good health... The mono and polyunsaturated. (Chicago, Male)



Message 2: “Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are healthier than saturated and *trans* fats.”

All four groups said things along the line of “look for the ‘un’” to remember that unsaturated types of fats are healthier than saturated. In particular, consumers recognized that using longer, hard to understand words prevent them from being better informed.

The key is the UN. (Chicago, Male)

Make it stand out. Because you got to let them know that “U-N” makes a difference. (Chicago, Male)

Yeah just [say] ‘unsaturated’ so you know. Because you know saturated is bad so anything that’s unsaturated has to be healthier. (Chicago, Female)

Using those long words, just like when you read all these ingredients and you don’t know what half that stuff is, that’s what the biggest problem is. These long words nobody takes the time to really understand what they mean. So we have to find a way to describe them in a cute little eye-catching way. (Chicago, Female)

Message 3: “Healthier fats keep your heart healthy.”

This message was well received but many consumers felt that its information applied to the entire body, not just the heart. In addition, many thought that including food examples would help improve the message’s clarity.

No [its not just your heart,] it’s about your whole body. Your body’s a machine and it distributes everything everywhere. I mean fat gets distributed throughout your whole body. I mean maybe I’m not familiar with how much the muscles use it. But it’s in your blood. It goes to your tissues. It travels in your oxygen. Just like anything else so it’s not just about your heart. You know maybe your muscles use it more, I don’t know but I’m sure the whole body takes advantage of all the necessary fat it can get. (Chicago, Female)

I would say ‘body healthy’. Because it...I think ‘heart healthy’ is people that are a little older, they’ve had a tendency of high cholesterol, heart attacks. I think that’s what should be there. (Chicago, Female)

But it’s not just for your heart. It’s your weight; it’s your whole body. Healthier fats are good for your body. (Baltimore, Male)

I think you have to know what the healthier fats are which we’ve learned from the previous handout. (Baltimore, Female)



Message 4: “For most people, a moderate fat diet means eating up to 65 grams of fat per day.”

Most found this message to be believable but some thought the information was meaningless without food examples and perspective of how much fat certain foods or meals have.

But to be in moderate then it would be sixty or less I imagine. I'm sure it's more, but I just thought that was high, but I guess not. I was surprised. (Chicago, Female)

Not understanding what the scale is about what is way too much [fat] and what is way too little it has no perspective. (Baltimore, Male)

Instead of...having them calculate it themselves, have something that's short and catchy on the label like “65 to stay alive” or something really goofy so that the customer can latch on to that and then there's no thinking involved. (Baltimore, Male)

Messaging Themes That Were Less Effective with Consumers

Message 5: “You can learn more about how much fat you need in your diet by visiting www.mypyramid.gov.”

While this message was believable and credible, many did not think they would actually visit this site to learn more.

I'm too busy on My Space and Craig's List. (Baltimore, Male)

They changed the guidelines just recently. (Chicago, Female)

I have heard of it. (Chicago, Female)

You know I'm not so sure. I'm torn between the fact that most people, common people will not go out of their way to educate themselves and I think that's why advertising works a lot there. Throwing it at you. So would I take the extra step and go to mypyramid.gov? Probably not. (Chicago, Female)

No, I'm not going to look up food. (Chicago, Male)

I'm not saving it to my favorites. (Baltimore, Male)



Message 6: “Balance higher fat foods with lower fat foods.”

This concept did not make sense to many consumers. They failed to understand how this would make their diets healthier overall since they would still be eating the same amount of fat rather than eating less fat overall.

Way I was misunderstanding was balance higher fat foods with lower fat foods would be the same as, to me, balance saturated fat foods with unsaturated fat foods. It's just confusing. What are you talking about? (Baltimore, Male)

You can't just think its okay to eat a high fat food. (Baltimore, Female)

You're not balancing. It sounds as if you want to cross one out for the other. There's no balance there. (Baltimore, Female)

You don't want them to be balanced, you want the scale lower, the high fat lower. (Chicago, Female)

Say a person is trying to make a change in their life and they're trying to eat healthier. Not for me, I don't think you balance any that day with lower fat foods and high fat foods. You're going to eat lower fat foods. So if you're balancing it, it's not doing anything. You're not progressing to that next step of trying to eat healthy. (Chicago, Male)

So like when I went back to the McDonald's and some people think that's balanced because they may have a big fat Big Mac with a side salad and a diet coke. (Chicago, Male)



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Recommendations

Recommended Communication Priorities:

- Educate consumers about the healthfulness and positive health aspects of certain types of fats.
- Provide examples of ways of selecting and utilizing more healthful types of fats when cooking and shopping.
- Explain why some fats are more healthful than others in terms of their effects on lipids and the body.

Recommended Messaging Ideas:

Message 1: “Fat is necessary for good health.”

- Some fat is necessary for good health. The types found in foods like nuts, seafood, and vegetable oils are better for you.

Message 2: “Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are healthier than saturated and *trans* fats.”

- When choosing foods with fats and oils, look for the “UN”: polyUNsaturated and monoUNsaturated fats rather than saturated and *trans* fats.

Message 3: “Healthier fats keep your heart healthy.”

- Healthier fats keep you healthy: look for the UNsaturated types (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated) found in foods like nuts, seafood, and vegetable oils used for cooking and in packaged products.

Message 4: “For most people, a moderate fat diet means eating up to 65 grams of fat per day.”

- Most people can eat up to 65 grams of fat in day on a moderate fat diet. This means that favorite foods (like ice cream and steak) that have more fat CAN fit if you choose other foods that are low in fat (like fruits, vegetables and whole grains).

New Messaging Concepts to Consider:

- Address the misperception by younger men that exercise means they can eat what ever they want with no repercussions.
- Address the misperception by women that fat is only a weight (calorie) issue rather than a heart health issue for them.



Appendix A: Screener

Focus Group Screener

Hello, my name is _____ with (INSERT FACILITY NAME), a consumer research firm. We are conducting a research study on health and nutrition issues. We'd like to ask you several questions about these issues. I will not be trying to sell you anything. Do you have a few minutes?

NOTE TO RECRUITER: PLEASE RECRUIT 1 ALL MALE GROUP AND 1 ALL FEMALE GROUP.

1. In your household, who is primarily responsible for buying and preparing food? Are you primarily responsible, is the responsibility shared between you and another person, or is someone else in your household responsible?

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Respondent is responsible | CONTINUE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Respondent and another person | THANK AND END |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Another person is responsible | THANK AND END |

2. How many times per week do you prepare and eat meals at home, either for yourself or for others such as your family: RECRUIT A MIX

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 or more times per week | CONTINUE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 3 times per week | CONTINUE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 4 times per month | CONTINUE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Once per month or less | THANK AND END |

3. Have you participated in a focus group in the last year? A focus group is an informal discussion with about 10 people led by a moderator and held at a market research firm.

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Yes | THANK AND END |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | No | CONTINUE |



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4. Please tell me if you or anyone living in your household currently works or has ever worked for any of the following professions:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | Market research or advertising | THANK AND END |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | Registered dietitian or nutritionist | THANK AND END |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 3 | Doctor, nurse or other health professional | THANK AND END |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 4 | Food Industry | THANK AND END |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 5 | No one in household works in above professions | CONTINUE |

5. What is your age?

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 18 - 24 | THANK AND END |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 25 - 54 | CONTINUE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 55+ | THANK AND END |

6. Do you have any children living in your household? (RECRUIT A MIX)

- 1 Yes CONTINUE
How many? _____
Ages: _____

- 2 No CONTINUE

7. Do you or does any member of your household follow a special diet for diabetes, heart disease, or high blood pressure which has been prescribed by a doctor?

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|-----|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 | Yes | THANK AND END |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | 2 | No | CONTINUE |

8. Do you exclude any particular foods or food groups from your diet for health or personal reasons?

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | Which foods do you exclude _____
(please check with moderator before recruiting) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | No | CONTINUE |

Are you a vegetarian?

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-----|-------------------------------|-----|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | Do you exclude milk and eggs? | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | Yes | THANK AND END |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | Continue |



Effective Communication of Dietary Fats

READ: The next questions are about your eating habits over the past 12 months. About how often did you eat, drink, or cook with each of the following foods? Please consider foods you typically have eaten for breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks and eating out.

9.

NOTE TO INTERVIEWER: Respondents need to have the majority of their answers to the top 9 foods within the green shaded boxes. If respondents have 7 or more answers to the top 9 foods fall in EITHER the yellow shaded areas or the pink shaded areas, please exclude them. If you have any questions about a participant, please call me (410-992-0775).

Type of Food	Lower Fat Behaviors				Higher Fat Behaviors			
	Never	Less than 1x per month	1-3 times per month	1-2 times per week	3-4 times per week	5-6 times per week	1 time per day	2 or more times per day
Regular, whole milk (not skim)								
Margarine or butter on bread or rolls								
Cheese or cheese spread, regular fat								
French fries, home fries, or hash browns								
Potato chips or corn chips, regular fat								
Margarine or butter on vegetables, including potatoes								
Mayonnaise, regular fat version								
Salad dressing, regular fat version								
Cook with lard, Crisco or fat back								
Olive or canola oil								
Nuts (almonds, walnuts, peanuts)								
Fish such as salmon, trout, tuna or herring								



Effective Communication of Dietary Fats

10. Overall, when you think about the foods you ate over the past 12 months, would you say your diet was high, moderate, or low in fat?

- 1 High
- 2 Moderate
- 3 Low
- 4 No Idea

11. For each of the following, please tell me whether the statement is TRUE or FALSE for you:

- | | | | |
|---|------|-------|----------|
| a. I usually read nutrition labels (Nutrition Facts Panel) on packages. | True | False | |
| b. When grocery shopping, I usually select foods that are low in fat. | True | False | |
| c. When ordering food from a restaurant (eat in or take out), I usually select foods that are lower in fat. | True | False | Not sure |
| d. Eating foods higher in <i>Trans</i> fat is associated with good health. | True | False | Not sure |
| e. Eating foods lower in saturated fat is associated with good health. | True | False | Not sure |
| f. Eating foods higher in monounsaturated fat is associated with good health. | True | False | Not sure |
| g. Eating foods like nuts, avocados and fish is associated with good health. | True | False | Not sure |

12. Are you currently (READ LIST):

- 1 Employed full-time outside/inside the home for pay
- 2 Employed part-time outside/inside the home for pay
- 3 At home but unpaid (Stay at home mom/dad)
- 4 Retired
- 5 Disabled

GET A MIX
THANK AND END
THANK AND END



Effective Communication of Dietary Fats

13. Are you (READ LIST):

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Married or living as married | RECRUIT 8 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | Single or living alone | RECRUIT 4 |

14. To make sure we are representing different groups in our study, would you describe yourself as:

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | White | RECRUIT 8 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | African American | <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100px; height: 40px; display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle;"></div> → |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Hispanic | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | Another race | |
| | | |

15. What was the last grade you completed in school? (RECRUIT A MIX)

- | | | |
|----------------------------|---|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Less than high school | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | High school diploma, GED, or technical school | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | Some college | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | College graduate | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5 | Some graduate or professional school | THANK AND END |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 | Graduate or professional degree | THANK AND END |

16. Which of the following categories describes your household's annual income? (RECRUIT A MIX)

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | <\$40,000 | THANK AND END |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | \$41K to <79K | CONTINUE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 | \$80K to <119K | CONTINUE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 | >120K | THANK AND END |

I'd like to invite you to participate in an informal group discussion known as a focus group on nutrition and health issues. During this discussion, you will be asked to read some information in English and tell us your opinions about it. Would this be a problem for you?

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|---------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 | Yes | THANK AND END |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 | No | CONTINUE |

We will be conducting the discussion group on (DATE) at (TIME) and would like to invite you to participate. The discussion will take place at (LOCATION) and will last no longer than 2 hours. You will be paid (INCENTIVE AMOUNT) as a token of our appreciation for your time and effort for participating in our research study.



Effective Communication of Dietary Fats

Are you interested in participating?

- 1 Yes CONTINUE
 2 No THANK AND END

RESPONDENT'S NAME _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

HOME PHONE _____ WORK PHONE _____



Appendix B: Discussion Guide

I. Introduction

5 minutes

- Taping
- Mirrors & Observers
- Opening question: What was your favorite food as a child?

II. Exploration of Fats' Attitudes & Knowledge

15 minutes

As you all know, tonight we're going to spend some time talking about food and nutrition issues. To start off, I want you to think about your FAVORITE food/meal as a child.... what are the words/terms that best describe that food/meal? How did that food/meal make you feel?

[Note what they say and don't say about the foods/meals.....]

Now I want you to imagine you are in the grocery store and you are in the process of shopping for all the usual food items that you buy.....you see a new item near one of the regular items that you buy....maybe its chips or a frozen meal or a new dessert.....something that comes in a package or box with a label (ingredients statement, product name, and a Nutrition Facts Panel). Tell me some of the specific things you might expect to see on that box or package that will tell you about the food in the box... I'm thinking about things with packaging and labels here, say a box or can or bag of something, not unlabeled produce or unlabeled fresh meat [Participants will generate a list of items they'd expect to see on a label, including the Nutrition Facts Panel, that they would find helpful in evaluating the product.]

[Moderator will write down things on flip chart and note which ones relate to fat...]

- Assuming that price is not an issue, what label information would make you put the item back on the shelf? (If necessary, what nutrient information would make you more likely to put the item back on the shelf?)
- Assuming that price is not an issue, what label information would make you put the item in your cart to try? (if necessary, what nutrient information would make you more likely to put the item in your cart?)
- Let's talk a bit about some of these terms up here: first of all (be honest).... which terms do you really pay attention to? Which terms do you tend to ignore?
- Are there terms that are confusing or that you feel you need more information about whether they are good for you or not so good for you?



VI. Awareness and Attitudes about Moderation

15 minutes

Let's all just acknowledge the fact that whether the type of fat is healthy or not, most of us eat these types of fat/foods regularly....Current advice about dietary fat is strive for a diet moderate in fats, and to focus on eating healthier fats when you do eat fats and oils.....

Part A: What might help?

- Now that you've all seen the fact sheet, have your thoughts on fats and oils in foods changed at all?
- Considering what you've learned about fats and oils, how likely are you to now use the Nutrition Facts panel or ingredients list information on packages? More likely, less likely or no change from before?
- If reading Nutrition Facts panel or the ingredient list is unlikely, can you think of any ways that might help you remember which fats are better for health?
- What might help you remember/remind you (as you shop) about these different types of fats? (*Probe for specific ideas here*)
- Are there any types of words, symbols, terms, slogans or icons) that you have seen on packages recently that have helped guide you toward healthier products? Can you think of any symbols, terms, or icons that would help you remember which fats are better for health?

Part B: Meaning and Interpretation of Moderation

- It's time for that favorite meal or food that we discussed earlier and you KNOW its higher in fatwhat are some ways you can still enjoy the food/meal? {Probe for ways to be moderate, balance, etc}
- What if the meal you want to enjoy is high in unhealthy fats (such as saturated or trans)? Are there ways you can still enjoy this meal or not?
- What does moderation mean? What are some words people use to describe "moderation"?
- What advice would you give to a friend/family member who wants to eat healthy but likes to eat foods that are higher in fat?
- Would you give the same advice to the friend/family member is the food or meal is high in unhealthy fats such as saturated or trans?



VII. Testing of Message Concepts

30 minutes

In the time we've got left, I'd like to show you some potential messages about fat....I'll show you each one separately and we'll talk them over....

[Note: Messages will be printed on a handout and on a flip chart.....] [HANDOUT F?]

Here's the first theme.....

Themes:

1. Some fat is necessary for good health
2. Keep your heart healthy with healthier fats
3. Choose healthier fats: monounsaturated and polyunsaturated are better than saturated and *trans* fat.
4. Balance higher fat foods with lower fat foods
5. Where to learn more about foods with fats and oils
6. How much fat to eat in one day to be healthy

For each theme:

- How believable is this idea?
- What would make it easier for people to make food choices that would make this idea a reality? What makes it hard for people to make food choices that would make this idea become a reality?
- Can you think of any ways to talk about this idea/information that would catch people's attention? (Probe for slogan, phrase, words, etc)

V. Wrap Up

5 minutes

- Final Thoughts



Appendix C: Handouts

Handout A: Food and Nutrition Labeling Terms

Protein	Fat	Carbohydrate
high in protein	vegetable oils (corn, soybean, cottonseed)	Whole grain
lean protein	saturated fats	High in fiber
complete protein	<i>trans</i> fat	Whole wheat
hydrolyzed protein	monounsaturated fats	low in sugar
soy protein	polyunsaturated fats	complex carbohydrate
vegetable protein	omega-3 fatty acids	carb-free
casein	hydrogenated oils	soluble fiber
whey	partially hydrogenated oils	bran
essential amino acids	tropical oils (palm, coconut, etc)	fructose
animal protein	olive oil	corn syrup
incomplete protein		refined sugars
		natural sugars

Handout B: page 2

avocados

eggs

cookies

doughnuts

French fries

steak

shrimp

salmon

whole milk

ice cream

vegetable oil (soybean, corn,
canola, etc.)

butter

chocolate

peanut butter

potato chips

margarine

olive oil

cream

walnuts

peanuts

almonds

avocados

eggs

cookies

doughnuts

French fries

steak

shrimp

salmon

salad dressing

cream cheese

whole milk

ice cream

chocolate

peanut butter

chips (potato,
corn, etc)

canola oil

corn oil

olive oil

vegetable oil

regular cheese
(American, Swiss,
cheddar, etc)

cottonseed oil

soybean oil

butter

cream

nuts (walnuts,
peanuts, almonds,
pistachios, etc)

fish oils

lard

fat back

shortening

saturated fat

monounsaturated fats,

polyunsaturated fats,

trans fats,

hydrogenated oils

partially hydrogenated oils

omega-3 fatty acids

omega-6 fatty acids

inter-esterified fatty acids

Handout E: Dietary Fats: A One-Page Guide

According to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, consuming foods that are low in saturated and *trans*-fats may help reduce your risk for developing heart disease. The goal is to consume mostly foods that contain poly- and monounsaturated sources of fat. Over the course of one day, a moderate fat intake is between 20 to 35% of total calories, which is about 65 grams per day of total fat for someone who weighs 150 pounds and eats about 2,000 calories per day.

Monounsaturated Fats:

- Are liquid at room temperature but can become solid after being chilled;
- Are beneficial for health when consumed in moderation and when used as a substitute for saturated and *trans*-fats;
- Help reduce cholesterol and decrease risk of developing heart disease;
- Food sources: vegetable oils including olive, canola, peanut, sunflower and sesame oil; avocados, peanut butter, and many different nuts and seeds.

Polyunsaturated Fats:

- Are liquid at both room temperature and when chilled;
- Are beneficial for health when consumed in moderation and when used to replace saturated or *trans*-fats;
- Help reduce cholesterol levels and decrease risk of heart disease;
- Include omega-6 and omega-3 fats, which are essential fats needed for healthy cell development;
- Food sources: vegetable oils like soybean, corn, and safflower oils; fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel, herring and trout; nuts and seeds.

Saturated Fats:

- Are solid at room temperature;
- Raise blood cholesterol levels and increase risk of developing heart disease;
- Animal food sources: saturated fats are found primarily in foods from animals such as fatty cuts of beef, lamb, pork, poultry with skin, beef fat (tallow), lard and cream, butter, cheese and other dairy products made from whole or reduced-fat (2%) milk;
- Plant food sources (tropical oils): palm oil, palm kernel oil and coconut oil also contain saturated fats.

Trans-Fats:

- Health effects are similar to eating saturated fats – they raise blood cholesterol levels and increase risk of developing heart disease.
- Food Sources: fried foods like French fries and doughnuts; baked goods including pastries, pie crusts, biscuits, pizza dough, cookies, and crackers; and stick margarines and shortenings;
- Food companies and restaurants are currently replacing *trans* fats in many foods with healthier fats.