

# UNILEVER'S POSITION ON SATURATED FATS REDUCTION



## Background

Health authorities around the world agree that a well-balanced diet that helps maintain a healthy heart is rich in good polyunsaturated fats (in nuts, seeds, fish, oils and vegetable-based spreads) and low in saturated fats (mainly in dairy and meat products). A well-balanced diet is also rich in whole grains, pulses and vegetables, is low in salt and added sugars, is moderate in total energy content and should be accompanied by a healthy physically active lifestyle.

However, there is still a mismatch between dietary recommendations and what people actually eat. There are also conflicting messages in the media on whether to reduce saturated fats or not, and whether saturated fats from dairy, meat or vegetable sources all have the same impact on our health.

## Context

Saturated fats give their texture and taste to a wide range of foods, for example butter, lard, pastries, cream, pies and cheese. They are solid outside the fridge and – in meat products – can easily be recognised as the white stripes in pieces of fatty red meat. Saturated fats are present in higher proportions in animal fats such as butter or lard than in vegetable oils such as sunflower, rapeseed or olive oil.

In Unilever products, saturated fats can be found in limited quantities in our spreads portfolio as well as in our ice creams and in some of our savoury and bakery products.

## Unilever's position

We support the dietary recommendations of international health authorities to replace excess saturated fats, which are found mostly in dairy and meat products, with polyunsaturated essential fats, which are found in nuts, seeds, fish, oils and vegetable-based spreads.





While we acknowledge that some specific saturated fatty acids may raise blood cholesterol more than others, we believe that replacing saturated fats as a whole group with polyunsaturated fats is the best approach. This is based on the evidence of the impact of such dietary replacements on overall heart health (and not only on blood cholesterol levels) and the need to apply a pragmatic approach towards dietary change. This approach is in agreement with the position of international health authorities.

As part of the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan, we are committed to improving our spreads recipes by reducing saturated fats as much as possible and increasing levels of good unsaturated fats, without compromising on taste and quality.

By 2012, 92% of our leading spreads by volume already contained less than 33% saturated fat as a proportion of total fat and provided at least 15% of the essential fatty acids recommended by international guidelines. In 2013, 82% of our global portfolio of soft vegetable oil spreads contained no more than 33% saturated fat and at least 67% good unsaturated fat.

We have now extended our commitment. By 2017, 90% of our complete global portfolio of soft vegetable oil spreads will contain no more than 33% fat as saturated fat and at least 67% as good unsaturated fat. In tropical areas, without chilled distribution, the maximum saturated fat content will be set at 38%, as a slightly higher saturated fat level is required to maintain the stability of the spreads. In addition, we have a global commitment on clear, simple nutrition labelling to enable healthy food choices.

We focus our commitment on spreads because this is where we can have the biggest impact on saturated fats reduction and therefore on public health. Beyond improving product composition, we are strengthening our efforts to inspire consumers to adopt a healthy balanced diet and lifestyle, working closely with retailers, governmental bodies, NGOs and nutritional experts.

