



# Ask the Dietitian

## *butter vs. margarine*

### *Which is better for my heart – butter or margarine?*

Really neither are great choices. Butter is an animal source of fat and is therefore higher in saturated fat compared to many other condiments and margarines are made using a process called partial hydrogenation which creates trans fats. Both saturated fats and trans fats can contribute to a higher blood cholesterol. Available in most markets today is another category of condiment simply labeled as a “spread.” Many of these brands of spreads you might identify as a margarine; however spreads are technically not the same as margarines. Spreads typically are made with less fat, different blends of fat and some brands use other manufacturing techniques besides partial hydrogenation to avoid trans fats. Many spreads are made with heart healthy fats such as olive oil or canola oil. Several brands fortify the spreads with additional heart healthy ingredients such as flax oil and fish oil for a source of omega-3’s as well as plant sterols which can interfere with dietary cholesterol absorption to assist with reducing blood levels of cholesterol. Also available are several choices of “light” butter. These products are about half the total fat and 1/3 the saturated fat of butter, but still have the great flavor of butter. Regardless of which types of condiments you enjoy with your foods, try to reduce the overall calories and fat you receive from condiments with about 4-6 teaspoons per day.

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**For further information please call our office and ask to speak to one of our Registered Dietitians**  
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*Expertise in Matters of the Heart*