

Summary:

Fats are concentrated source of energy providing 9 Kcal/g, and are made up of fatty acids in different proportions. Dietary fats are derived from two sources viz. the invisible fat present in plant and animal foods; and the visible or added fats and oils. Fats serve as a vehicle for fat-soluble vitamins like vitamins A, D, E and K and carotenes. It is necessary to have adequate and good quality fat in the diet with sufficient polyunsaturated fatty acids in proper proportions. The functions of lipids include generation of cellular energy; bactericidal activity; growth and development, preventing CHD, to maintain healthy skin and acts as insulator, protector for certain vital organs. Deficiency of lipid causes phrynoderma, dry, thick, flaking skin, retarded growth, abnormalities in vision, permanent learning defects and alterations in synaptic functions in the brain. Diet should include adequate amounts of fat particularly for infants and children. Excess consumption of fats could lead to obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer.