

# Butter vs margarine? There is a difference

by Alleyne Attwood  
 "I'm so bewildered by all the claims and counter-claims, the gimmicky diets." This is the cry I often hear. "What can a person believe?"

Perhaps one of the most confusing to people who are really trying to sort out fact from half truths, is the current margarine versus butter controversy in relation to heart disease.

The Dairy Association advertises that butter is better and shows two columns of ingredients one for butter and one for margarine.

So what? It really makes us little wiser which one is the longest!

A margarine producer will hail the fact that because his margarine is 100 percent vegetable oil everyone should buy his product for health. And the public-confused!

What really are the facts in terms that Mr. or Mrs. Shopper can understand and then can make an informed decision as to which to buy based on knowledge?

Because in Canada and United States heart disease is very prevalent, (unlike many African and Asian countries) research is showing that some manipulation of our diet is necessary especially as we eat so many manufactured products.

A seven year research project of monumental proportions involving thousands and thousands of people and which will be completed in two years, is showing clearly that fats in the diet are a factor in heart disease.

Fats in the blood are called Lipids and two parts of the Lipids are the cholesterol and the triglycerides which have become such a popular subject lately.

It is known that if the blood cholesterol or blood triglycerides are higher than normal then the person is at higher risk for heart trouble than a person who has normal lipid values. However, overweight, smoking, drinking and a family history of heart problems also are risk factors.

Cutting out any one of these might bring down the cholesterol and triglycerides.

So what has all this to do with butter and margarine? If a person is slim and has normal blood lipids, it is only a matter of taste, or price.

If you are a person at risk, the choice of a so-called "special" margarine could be one more factor in giving you longer life.

Why? - because butter is what is called a "saturated fat" and

saturated fats increase cholesterol and triglycerides. "Special margarines" have a high percentage of "unsaturated" fat and unsaturated fats tend to

lower blood lipids. Certain oils, especially corn oil, soya bean oil and sunflower seed oil also have this ability. However, you must also watch that on your

package of margarine is stated: 35 percent (or more) unsaturated fat 18 percent (or less) saturated fat. Some vegetable oils which are fine as oils, in

being made into margarine, are "hydrogenated" and become like butter. The label "100 percent vegetable oil" means nothing. Look for the

label that says how much saturated and unsaturated fats it contains. You will also find that these are not necessarily the most

expensive. If you are a person "at risk" cut down on all animal fats. If you are not "at risk" don't worry about it.

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# MONDAY NOV. 10

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