



## Reduced and/or modified dietary fat may prevent cardiovascular disease

### Clinical question

How effective is reduction and/or modification of dietary fat for preventing cardiovascular disease and cancer?

### Bottom line

Reducing saturated fat by reducing and/or modifying dietary fat reduced the risk of cardiovascular events by 14%. Subgrouping suggested this reduction in cardiovascular events was seen in studies of fat modification but not reduction of at least 2 years' duration, and in studies of men (not of women). There were no clear effects of dietary fat changes on total mortality or cardiovascular mortality. This did not alter with subgrouping or sensitivity analysis. No evidence was found on the long-term health effects of altering trans fat intake. There was no effect of altering dietary fat intake on cancer diagnoses or deaths.

### Caveat

Few studies compared reduced with modified fat diets, so direct comparison was not possible. The ideal type of unsaturated fat was unclear.

### Context

Reduction and modification of dietary fats have differing effects on cardiovascular risk factors (such as serum cholesterol), but their effects on important health outcomes are less clear.

### Cochrane Systematic Review

Hooper L et al. Reduced or modified dietary fat for preventing cardiovascular disease. Cochrane Reviews, 2011, Issue 7. Article No. CD002137. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD002137.pub2. *This review contains 48 studies involving 71,795 participants.*

PEARLS No. 333, October 2011, written by Brian R McAvoy.

*PEARLS are succinct summaries of Cochrane Systematic Reviews for primary care practitioners – developed by the Cochrane Primary Care Field, New Zealand Branch of the Australasian Cochrane Centre at the Department of General Practice and Primary Health Care, University of Auckland and funded by the New Zealand Guidelines Group. New Zealanders can access the Cochrane Library free via [www.nzgg.org.nz](http://www.nzgg.org.nz)*

*PEARLS provide guidance on whether a treatment is effective or ineffective. PEARLS are prepared as an educational resource and do not replace clinician judgement in the management of individual cases. View PEARLS online at: [www.nzdoctor.co.nz](http://www.nzdoctor.co.nz); [www.nzgg.org.nz](http://www.nzgg.org.nz); [www.cochraneprimarycare.org](http://www.cochraneprimarycare.org)*