



Amidst the barrage of obesity prevention campaigns, what is often not discussed or even recognised by some health professionals are the functions of fat. The reality is that fat is neither “good” nor “bad” in itself, but a necessary part of the human body. Without it, you wouldn’t be alive. So rather than telling you how bad fat is for you, we thought we’d tell you why you need to have fat- both in your diet, and on your body.

### **TOP TEN FUNCTIONS OF FAT**

1. Fat provides you with insulation. This means when you are walking across the soccer field and someone accidentally kicks a ball into your gut, your organs will be protected from shock and damage.
2. Fat also provides insulation under the skin so you are protected from your body temperature dropping too low, essentially preventing you from getting too cold.
3. Fat provides you with much-needed energy, including back-up energy when your blood sugar levels run out, so you can continue to function and concentrate in the tasks at hand.
4. Fat makes food taste pleasurable and increases the likelihood of detecting satiety. This may explain why many people find they are likely to eat 3 or 4 times as much when they eat something labelled “low-fat.” It’s usually less satisfying and less pleasurable- leaving you craving for more.
5. Fat is necessary for your body to absorb fat soluble vitamins and to prevent deficiencies of these.
6. Fat plays an important role in your neural system, surrounding and insulating nerve fibres to help transmit nerve impulses.
7. Fat also assists in regulating hormones and forms the building blocks to support immune function.
8. Women in particular need approximately 18% fat just to menstruate, and approximately 23% fat minimum in order to sustain fertility.
9. For children, fat is very important in triggering and facilitating puberty at the appropriate time.
10. Fat forms part of every cell membrane in the body. It helps transport essential nutrients and metabolites across cell membranes.

### **BONUS FACT**

Did you know that your brain uses approximately one-third of your overall intake of glucose? And it also uses approximately one-fourth of your recommended daily food intake? It is not uncommon for eating disorder sufferers to convince themselves that if they are not exercising for the day, they do not need to eat. But the reality is that your body needs plenty of energy even just to function! If you are worried you may have a problem with your eating or body image, please contact us at [www.bodymatters.com.au](http://www.bodymatters.com.au) – we would love to assist you in any way we can.