

# Nutrition Terms

- Calcium:** A mineral needed for maintenance of teeth and bones.
- Calorie or Kilo-calorie:** Kilo-calorie's are often referred to as calories, but the correct scientific term is kilocalorie. It is a unit of measurement, that measures heat given off in the burning of food to make energy.
- Carbohydrates:** Carbohydrates provide energy to the body. The body will use carbohydrates before protein and fat for energy, if it is available. It has 4 calories per gram. If carbohydrates are in excess of body needs, they will be stored as fat.
- Fat:** Fat is needed in the body to insulate and protect it and to regulate body temperature. If too much fat is eaten it will be stored as fat. Fat has 9 calories per gram. It is the fuel or energy when aerobic activity is being done. 30% calories from fat is the daily recommendation for the overall diet. 10% coming from monounsaturated, 10% from polyunsaturated, and 10% from saturated fat.
- Fats, including butter and margarine, vary in their content of saturated and unsaturated fat. There is evidence that a diet high in saturated fat increases the risk for heart disease and other illnesses. As a general rule, saturated fats come from animal fats and unsaturated fats come from vegetable fats. There are exceptions like coconut and palm oil, which are high in saturated fats. You would think that margarine has less saturated fat than butter because it is made from vegetable oil, whereas butter is made from cream. This is true except for those margarine's that are highly hydrogenated. Hydrogenation increases saturation in a fat, so that these margarine's are more saturated than you would expect. The key is to read the labels.
- Gram or gm.:** A gram is a unit from the metric system that measures weight. One (1) gram is about 1/28 of an ounce. Mg, or milligram is 1/1000 of a gram.
- Iron:** Iron is a mineral responsible for transporting oxygen from the lungs to red blood cells. Iron is also found in the muscle, where it is needed to pick up oxygen from blood so the muscles can contract and do their work.
- Vitamin A:** Vitamin A is necessary to make pigment in the eye. It also plays a role in growth and helps maintain healthy hair, skin, and body membranes. Retinol is the most active form of Vitamin A for the body to use. Carotenoids, which give yellow and orange colors to fruits and vegetables, are precursors that are converted to Vitamin A in the intestine.
- Vitamin C:** Vitamin is a key part of collagen, a structural substance that is part of the bone, cartilage and connective tissue system. It helps to control the use of body fat from energy and it increases the absorption of iron in the intestine. Vitamin C is found in citrus fruits and some vegetables.