Fat: Back in Favor?

Nutritionist Goulda Downer, RD, PhD, looks at the latest research

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Now that a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* has found that low-fat diets don't prevent heart disease or cancer, is it safe to return to regularly chowing on cheese fries? Not quite.

The study found that eating less fat failed to prevent breast cancer, colon cancer, heart disease or stroke in older women who implemented changes after menopause. But since the study began back in 1993, our knowledge has increased. Study participants were asked to reduce total fat—but we've learned that there's a difference between "good fats" (found in fish and nuts) and "bad fats," like trans and saturated fats.

Rising rates of obesity and weight-related illnesses underscore the importance of lifestyle changes, particularly among African Americans. Follow these healthful tips:

Choose foods lower in trans fats, saturated fats and cholesterol.
Kick up food flavor with herbs and low-sodium seasonings.
Remember that fat-free foods are not calorie-free.
Enjoy favorite foods in smaller portions, and skip seconds.

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