

New analyses of studies show that processed foods, not saturated fats, are to blame for poor heart health.



A Big, Fat Surprise

If you want a healthy fat to top your steamed vegetables, consider adding a pat of butter. Despite butter's dubious reputation as a high-fat villain, experts say the organic version, made from the milk of grass-fed cows, is stacked with omega-3s, vitamins, and minerals. "Saturated fat is not inherently bad for you," says Marjorie Nolan Cohn, R.D. "When eaten as part of a well-balanced diet, grass-fed butter can be beneficial." Credit the omega fats, which are often lacking in Americans' diets, adds Cohn. That doesn't mean you should slather everything in butter: In general, keep saturated fat to no more than 10% of your diet through sources like grass-fed butter, coconut oil, and naturally occurring saturated fats found in meat, animal products, and dairy. —*Diana Kelly*

THE FIVE-SECOND RULE, VALIDATED!

Remember the old five-second rule that gave you permission to eat food that fell on the floor if it had been there for only a moment or two? Turns out there's some scientific rationale for the practice. Researchers from Aston University in the United Kingdom found that food picked up just a few seconds after being dropped on the floor is less likely to contain bacteria than that left to linger longer. They also found carpeted surfaces are less likely to transfer bacteria to moist food than laminated or tiled ones. Still, exercise some caution when scooping up those scrambled eggs. "In general, the level of bacteria will not increase in five seconds since they don't grow that fast," notes microbiologist Charles Gerba, Ph.D. "But really it all depends on where it lands." —*D.K.*

87%
of people surveyed said they would eat food dropped on the floor or have done so.

Source: Aston University



TRY THIS: MONK FRUIT

You may have noticed a new sugar alternative on store shelves. Monk fruit, derived from the extract of the gourd plant, is becoming a popular way to add sweetness without adding a lot of calories. Derived from a round, green melon-like fruit traditionally grown in central Asia, it's about 300 times sweeter than the real stuff and a natural option in place of artificial varieties like sucralose (Splenda) or aspartame (Equal). The sugary taste comes from an antioxidant called mogrosin, which may have its own health benefits. Proponents like its zero-calorie properties, but others say it has a funny aftertaste. The only way to know for sure if it hits the spot as your new low-calorie alternative to sugar? Give it a try for yourself. —Amy Schlinger