

# Are You Getting Creamed?

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Maybe you only use coffee creamer at the office, pouring in just enough to make your java look and taste creamy. Or perhaps you indulge in hazelnut, French vanilla, caramel vanilla, Irish cream, vanilla toffee caramel, or some other flavoured liquid or powdered creamer.

Either way, you may not realize how much saturated fat, trans fat, sugar, or calories you're pouring into your coffee.

By the time you consider large mugs, imprecise pouring, and seconds or thirds, you may be getting much more from that creamer than you think.

Information compiled by Namita Davis in Toronto.

## Imperfect Powder

Unlike Nestlé Original Coffee-mate powder, the company's flavoured powders don't claim to "reduce the risk of heart disease." Maybe that's because the serving size for flavoured creamers is one tablespoon, not one teaspoon.

Ironically, Coffee-mate French Vanilla and Hazelnut are less of a heart threat than the Original. Instead of partially hydrogenated canola oil, they're made with coconut and/or palm oil, which means the trans fat is negligible.

But the saturated fat isn't. Each tablespoon of flavoured powder has 2.5 grams of sat fat and, thanks in part to added sugar, 60 calories. That's worse than the 2 grams of sat fat and 40 calories in two tablespoons of half & half. But, unlike Original Coffee-mate powder, the flavoured powders have no trans. That makes flavoured Coffee-mate your best bet in a powder. But a freebie it isn't.



**Worse than half & half.**



**Creamers made with soybean or canola oil are the worst.**

## Liquid Trans

In the United States, International Delight has no trans fat. But since it's made with non-hydrogenated palm oil, it has saturated fat (about as much as ordinary half & half).

In Canada, International Delight is made with partially hydrogenated soybean oil. And that means trans.

Each tablespoon delivers 1 gram of trans fat and 0.4 grams of sat fat. Ouch. Experts recommend as little trans as possible, but certainly no more than 2 grams a day. Use two tablespoons because you've got a 12-ounce mug or you want your coffee a little creamier and you're there. Drink three mugs a day and you're up to 6 grams of trans.

In contrast, while two tablespoons of liquid Coffee-mate (in flavours like French Vanilla and Irish Cream) may have 3.2 grams of sat fat that you don't need, at least they come from trans-free hydrogenated coconut oil.

International Delight is an International Disaster.



## Heart Threat

"A healthy diet low in saturated and trans fats may reduce the risk of heart disease. COFFEE-MATE is low in saturated and trans fats," says the label of Original Coffee-mate powder.



**Enough trans to threaten your heart.**

What nerve! Coffee-mate powder can make a heart disease claim because the label says it has only 0.5 grams of saturated fat and 0.4 grams of trans fat. But that's for a puny one-teaspoon serving that's unlikely to whiten an entire mug of coffee.

If you use a more-realistic one-tablespoon serving, you're up to 1.5 grams of sat fat and 1.2 grams of trans. That's more than half of the 2-gram daily trans limit recommended by experts.

Light Coffee-mate powder doesn't deserve to make its heart disease claim either. Each teaspoon has 0.3 grams of sat fat plus 0.2 grams of trans. But if you go beyond one teaspoon—or go back for a second or third cup—the trans adds up.

No Name Coffee Whitener is also trans-laden (0.5 grams per teaspoon), thanks to partially hydrogenated canola oil. Steer clear of any creamer that's made with partially hydrogenated canola, soybean, or cottonseed oil. It takes trans to make those unsaturated oils taste creamy.

But you'd never know it from Coffee-mate's label.

## No Free Lunch

You can dodge much of the bad fat in flavoured creamers by using a fat-free liquid.

Coffee-mate Fat Free French Vanilla or Hazelnut liquid, for example, has just 0.8 grams of sat fat (and no trans) in two tablespoons, which is what it takes to whiten most mugs of coffee. International Delight Fat Free cuts the trans to 0.3 grams and the sat fat to 0.1 gram in two tablespoons. That's still too much trans, but it's nowhere near as bad as regular International Delight.

But fat-free creamers don't cut many calories. Fat-free liquid Coffee-mate or International Delight still has 50 or 60 calories, thanks to the added sugar. That's less than the 70 or 80 calories in regular International Delight or regular flavoured Coffee-mate, but it still adds up.

Natrel Café French Vanilla with Splenda eliminates the sugar, which cuts the calories to 30. But you end up with the poorly tested artificial sweetener acesulfame-potassium along with (safe) Splenda.

If it's just sweetness you want, add your own Splenda to coffee whitened with Dairyland Fat Free Creama. If you can't live without fat-free French vanilla, stick to one mug a day.



**If you're stuck on flavours, stick to one mug a day.**



**With 20 calories and virtually no bad fat, it's a steal.**

# Cream, Please

**Best Bites** (✓✓) have no partially hydrogenated oil, no more than 0.6 grams of saturated fat, and no more than 30 calories per serving. **Honourable Mentions** (✓) can have up to 1 gram of sat fat. *Both refer to numbers, not taste.* Our numbers may not match the labels because we increased some serving sizes. Creamers are ranked from least to most bad fat (sat plus trans), then calories. Milk numbers (*in italics*) are for comparison.

Liquid Creamers, Half & Half, etc. (2 Tbs.)	Calories	Sat Fat (g)	Trans Fat (g)	Sat + Trans Fat (g)
✓✓ Dairyland Creama, Fat Free	20	0.2	0	0.2
International Delight, Fat Free, flavoured	60	0.1*	0.3*	0.4*
✓✓ Silk For Coffee Soy Beverage	30	0.5*	0	0.5*
✓✓ Milk—skim, 1%, 2%, or homogenized	10-20	0-0.6	0	0-0.6
Nestlé Coffee-mate, Fat Free, flavoured	50	0.8	0	0.8
✓ Light cream (5%-6% M.F.), any brand <sup>1</sup>	30	1	0	1
Dairyland Creama, flavoured	80	1	0	1
Natrel Café French Vanilla with Splenda <sup>#</sup>	30	1	0.2	1.2
Natrel Café, except French Vanilla with Splenda	50	1	0.2	1.2
Half & Half (10% M.F.), any brand <sup>1</sup>	40	2	0	2
International Delight, flavoured	80	0.8	2	2.8
Table cream (18% M.F.), any brand <sup>1</sup>	60	3	0.1	3.1
Nestlé Coffee-mate, flavoured	70	3.2	0	3.2
<b>Powdered Creamers (1 Tbs.)</b>				
Nestlé Coffee-mate, Light	40	0.9	0.6	1.5
No Name Coffee Whitener	50	0.6	1.5	2.1
Nestlé Coffee-mate, flavoured	60	2.5	0	2.5
Nestlé Coffee-mate, Original	50	1.5	1.2	2.7

✓✓ Best Bite. ✓ Honourable Mention. <sup>1</sup>Average. \*CSPI estimate. #Contains acesulfame-potassium.

**Daily Limits** (for a 2,000-calorie diet): **Saturated + Trans Fat:** 20 grams.

Source: Company information and U.S. Department of Agriculture. The use of information from this article for commercial purposes is strictly prohibited without written permission from CSPI.

## Creama the Crop

Fat-free "cream" sounds like an oxymoron...or a carton full of gummy fake fat. Wrong. Dairyland Fat Free Creama isn't exactly a dead ringer for real half & half, but to many taste buds, it's close. And two tablespoons will cost you just 20 calories.

Other alternatives: if your usual skim or 1% milk isn't creamy enough, buy some 2% or homogenized milk to use just for coffee. Or try Silk, a soy-based creamer. Just keep in mind that it's made with palm oil, so it's got about as much saturated fat as homogenized

milk (0.5 grams in two tablespoons).

If you're still hankering for creaminess, try any brand of light cream (5% to 6% M.F.). It's got more sat fat (1 gram in two tablespoons) than Dairyland Fat Free Creama (0.2 grams), but less than half & half (10% M.F.), which has 2 grams of sat fat.

Bonus: Dairyland Fat Free Creama works in some recipes that call for the real thing. It's the closest you can get to a free lunch (or a free cup of coffee).