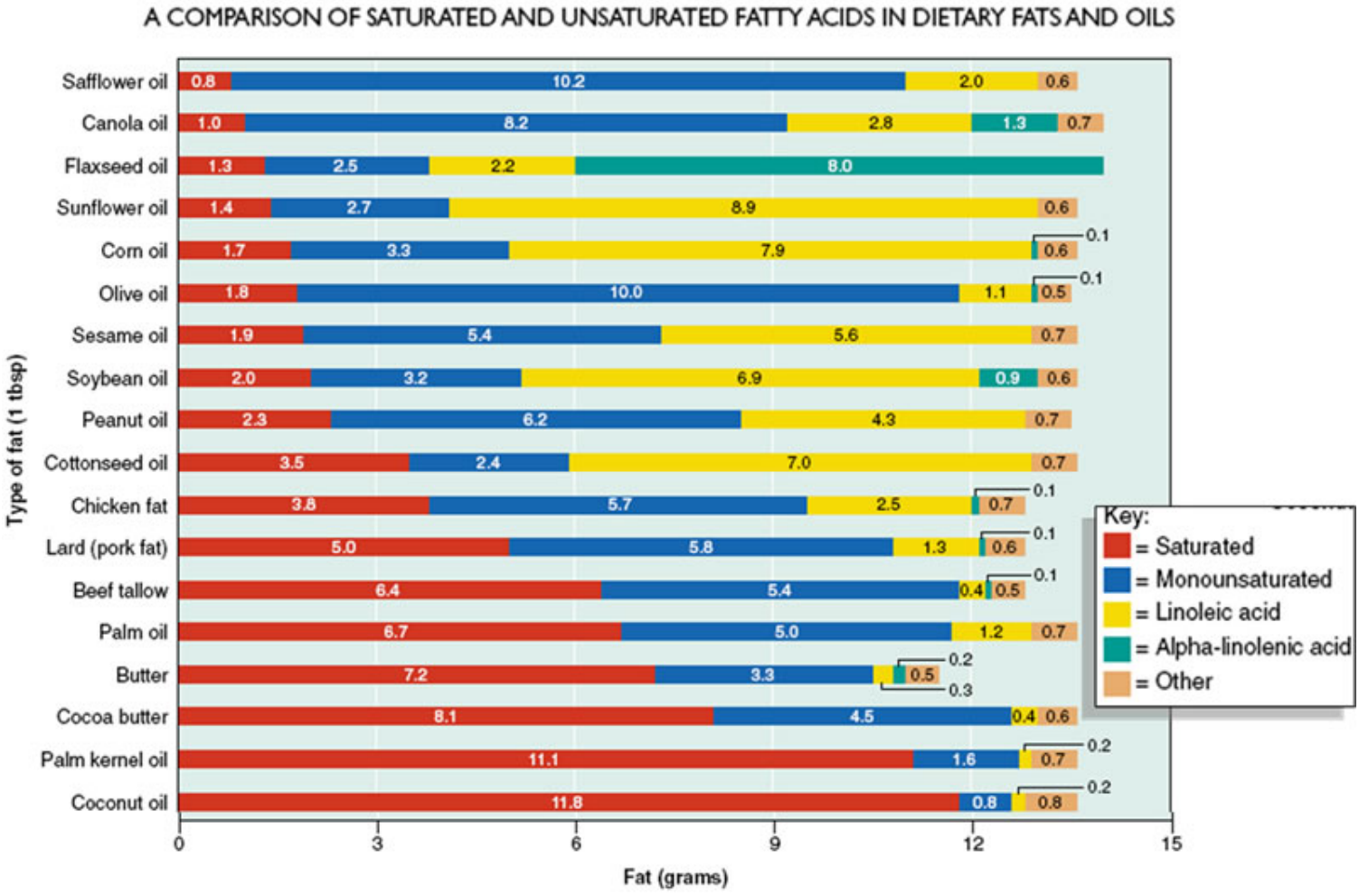
Fatty Acid Composition of Fats and Oils

	Percent of Total Fatty Acids		
Kind of Fat or Oil	**Saturated**	**Monounsaturated**	**Polyunsaturated**
Safflower oil	9	13	78
Sunflower oil	11	20	69
Corn oil	13	25	62
Olive oil	14	77	9
Soybean oil	15	24	61
Peanut oil	18	48	34
Sockeye salmon oil	20	55	25
Cottonseed oil	27	19	54
Lard	41	47	12
Palm oil	51	39	10
Beef tallow	52	44	4
Butterfat	66	30	4
Palm kernel oil	86	12	2
Coconut oil	92	6	2



Bottom figure from *Personal Nutrition*, 6th ed., Boyle & Anderson, Thomson/Wadsworth, 2007.

Some Interesting Notes:

- **Palm oil**, **palm kernel oil**, and **coconut oil** (the so-called **tropical oils**), while still considered vegetable "oils", have as much or more saturated fatty acid content than lard, beef tallow, and butterfat. Indeed, they are not liquids at room temperature like the other vegetable oils, but solids. Look at the ingredients on that package of chips or crackers you buy

from the vending machine. You're likely to find one of those oils. That's because, while these types of foods need some kind of oil for flavor and to aid in chewing and swallowing, the manufacturers think it's more aesthetically pleasing to have a nice dry, fluffy product rather than one that's dripping with oil. Once you get these into your mouth, the solid oils melt, providing the necessary lubrication. They also have a longer shelf life.

- **Olive oil** is far higher in monounsaturated fatty acids than any other fat or oil. Unsaturated fatty acids are thought to be better for your health than saturated fatty acids, with monounsaturated ones being the best.
- Many food products list "**partially hydrogenated**" vegetables oils in their ingredients. Hydrogenation increases the amount of saturation (to make the oil a solid at room temperature -- nobody likes pouring liquid oil on their toast!), thereby calling into question whether or not they are any better for you than animal fats. **Note the conspicuous absence of margarine or related products from these tables.** I don't think they want us to know how saturated they are. **Worse yet**, the hydrogenation process also isomerizes some of the natural ***cis*** double bonds into their ***trans*** isomers. ***Trans*-fatty acids are thought to be deleterious to your health.**