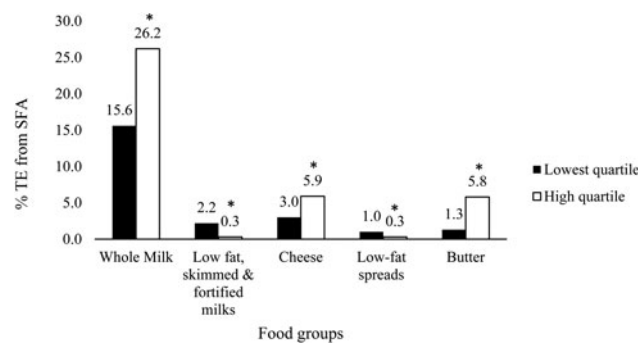


## Dietary determinants of saturated fat intake in Irish children (5–12 years)

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It is well established that elevated intakes of saturated fatty acids (SFA) are associated with an increased risk of chronic diseases<sup>(1)</sup>. In Ireland, current dietary guidelines recommend that dietary SFA should account for ≤10% of total energy (TE) in children over 5 years<sup>(2)</sup>; however, only 2% of Irish children are meeting this recommendation<sup>(3)</sup>. The aim of this analysis was to investigate the dietary sources and determinants of SFA intake in Irish children. Analyses were based on data from the National Children's Food Survey (NCFS; 2003–2004) which collected detailed food and beverage intake data from 7-d weighed food diaries from a nationally representative sample of 594 children aged 5–12 years ([www.iuna.net](http://www.iuna.net)). Dietary intakes were analysed using WISP<sup>®</sup>, which is based on McCance and Widdowson's *The Composition of Foods, Sixth Edition*<sup>(4)</sup>. The population was split into quartiles of %TE from SFA (lowest, low, medium and high consumers) and dietary sources and determinants of SFA intake were calculated using SPSS<sup>®</sup>.



Comparison of the contribution of food groups to SFA intake (%TE) between quartiles. Differences between quartiles assessed using ANOVA with Scheffe post hoc test; \*Significant differences between quartiles ( $P < 0.05$ ).

Percentage TE from SFA increased significantly across all quartiles, from 12%TE in the lowest quartile to 18%TE in the highest ( $p < 0.001$ ). In contrast, %TE from carbohydrates and total sugars significantly decreased from lowest to highest quartile ( $p < 0.001$ ). 'Whole milk', 'sugar, confectionary and preserves', 'biscuits, cakes, pastries and buns' and 'meat products' were the four major contributors across all quartiles to SFA (%TE). Comparisons between the lowest and highest consumers indicated that whole milk had the largest difference between these quartiles (10.6%TE,  $p < 0.001$ ), with other dairy food groups such as cheese and butter also showing significant differences. In conclusion, these findings indicate the dietary determinants of saturated fat intakes and may be useful for developing dietary strategies to improve compliance with national recommendations.

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