NUTRITION NUGGET # 6 What is better, butter or margarine?

Answer: Margarine may be healthier, pending on the amount of trans fats.

Facts:

- Margarine is made of vegetable oils, unlike butter, which contains plant sterols. Plant sterols may improve cholesterol levels and protect against heart disease.
- Butter has saturated fat, a type of fat associated with heart disease.
- Margarine is created by hydrogenating liquid vegetable oils to make them solid, or trans fats. Trans fats are also harmful to our health.
- Tub and whipped margarines have less trans fats than stick margarines.
- Check labels of butter and margarine for fat and calorie amounts.



Apply: A participant tells you they have a family history of heart disease and loves buttered bagels for breakfast. What do you recommend?

References: Dugdale DC. Butter, Margarine, and Cooking Oils. http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/patientinstructions/000095.htm. Patch CS, Tapsell LC, Williams PG, Gordon M. Plant Sterols as Dietary Adjuvants in Reduction of Cardiovascular Risk: Theory and Evidence. *Vasc Health Risk Manag.* 2006; 2(2) 157-162. Jenkins DJA, Kendall CWC. Plant Sterols, Health Claims, and Strategies to Reduce Cardiovascular Disease Risk. *Journal of the American College of Nutrition.* 1999; 18 (6) 559-562; Butter image: http://www.aolcdn.com/photogalleryassets/food/512069/food-shelf-life-butter-365mn022409.jpg; Benecol label http://www.scientificpsychic.com/fitness/benecol.jpg; American's Choice Butter http://media.photobucket.com/image/butter+nutrition+label+/nutri_nut_/Nutrition%2520Information/Dairy/Cream/5-25-200992742PM.jpg