

# Health Awareness

A County Health Pool Publication



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## Trans Fats, The Plain Truth

**F**rench fries, that warm, crunchy, tasty and popular food item that fills the soul and pleases the palate. We love every tasty crunch but, IT DOES NOT LOVE US!



Hidden within this and other similar food creations are the most dangerous forms of artery clogging fats known to man, TRANS FATS!

### What Are Trans Fats?

Trans fats, which are considered to be some of the most dangerous forms of fat, are engineered from liquid oils through a process known as hydrogenation.

Trans fats were once thought to be the ultimate fat because they enhance the way foods taste. They also extend the shelf life of foods and make crisp foods crunchier and creamy foods creamier. And the price is lower than other fats.

As a result, trans fats found their way into many of Americans' favorite processed foods. Only later did doctors begin to realize how damaging they can be to the heart

### Where Can They Be Found?

Unhealthy trans fats lurk in most processed foods, including cookies, baked goods, popcorn, margarines, shortenings, crackers, doughnuts, chips, frozen waffles, and french fries.



Eighty percent of trans fats come from processed foods; the other 20% occur naturally in meat and dairy products. Although meat and dairy contain small amounts of trans fats, they can also be loaded with the equally unhealthy saturated fats, says nutritionist Elizabeth Ward, MS, RD.

Trans fats in meat and dairy are only a concern to people who eat large quantities of full-fat dairy and

high-fat meat, says Ward. Choosing low-fat dairy and lean meats will reduce the harmful trans and saturated fats.

Ward advises that we shift from fat-laden processed foods to more natural, wholesome foods that are chock full of disease-fighting, healthful nutrients.

“Eat a diet of fresh, whole ingredients, limit the amount of processed foods in your diet, and always choose the lowest-fat variety of meat and dairy to wipe out the bulk of harmful trans fats.”

### How Much Is Too Much?

Doctors who are experts on dietary guidelines tell us that there is no dietary recommendation for trans fatty acids; consumption should be kept as low as possible. Trans fats increase LDL “bad” cholesterol levels, which increases the risk for heart disease.

*(Over)*



## Trans Fats, The Plain Truth (Continued)

The Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee recommendation is to limit the intake of trans fats, and with the help of food manufacturers, we can help educate Americans to make better food choices.

Total fats should make up no more than 25%-35% of your total daily calories. For example, someone who eats 2,000 calories a day should get 500 to 700 calories from fat -- about 55 to 75 grams of fat a day. And most of this should come from healthy fats.



Healthier oils include vegetable oils, such as corn, soybean, canola, and olive oils -- but not the tropical palm or coconut oils. Other ways to skim the saturated fat in your diet is to choose lean meats, such as skinless chicken and turkey, lean beef, and low-fat dairy.

Remember trans fats when eating out. Keep in mind when you smell the aroma of the freshly baked doughnuts or french fries that these foods may not be labeled on the menu but they are a huge source of trans fats in our diets.

Source: [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com).

## Changing Face of Foods, are Trans Fats Easier to Spot?

The amount of artery-clogging trans fats will now be listed on food labels. The mysterious trans fats will be hidden in foods no more. The FDA now requires all manufacturers to list the amount of artery-clogging trans fats in foods. Food manufacturers are now looking for suitable replacements for trans fats.

The challenge to the food makers is to preserve the same great flavors while eliminating or minimizing the unhealthy trans fats. A flurry of “trans-fat free” products have popped up in recent years. The following list are some of the foods that made the “most unwanted list.” Some formerly bad characters have cleaned up their act. Values listed for trans fats are per serving.

**Spreads.** Margarine continues to be a major culprit. Stick margarine is worse than soft margarine.

- Land O’Lakes stick margarine --2.5 grams
- Smart Balance tub margarine -- 0

*Tip: Dip bread in flavored olive oil instead of slathering it with butter.*

**Packaged foods.** Enter the aisles of quick mixes as though you’re going into a dangerous neighborhood. Kraft has reformulated most of its products, and Easy Mac now has no trans fats.

- Old El Paso Taco Shells -- 2.5 grams
- Keebler Ready Crust, Graham -- 2 grams
- Lipton Pasta Sides -- 0 grams
- Kraft Easy Mac -- 0 grams

*Tip: Bake cakes from scratch and make frosting with fat-free cream cheese drizzled with melted chocolate. Or replace frosting with jelly or powdered sugar.*

**Fast food.** Fast-food and other restaurants are among the major users of partially hydrogenated oils, but they’re not required to provide nutrition labels. Many McDonald’s breakfast items are loaded. A sausage biscuit has 5 grams of trans fats, a deluxe warm cinnamon roll has 6, and a deluxe breakfast has 11.

*Tip: Before ordering, ask if trans fats were used in preparing the food.*

Source: [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com).

Coming in your future newsletters, there will be a section on benefits and their application. We hope this will enhance your understanding of your plan benefit. We look forward to and encourage your feedback on this ongoing segment.