



EAT RIGHT

F O R L I F E

Become More Healthy in the Foods You Eat... *Trans Fat*

Why worry about *trans* fat?

Eating too much *trans* fat raises the level of bad cholesterol (LDL) in your blood and may reduce your good cholesterol (HDL) level. This puts you at greater risk of heart attack or stroke. To address this issue, the Food and Drug Administration has required labeling of *trans* fat contents in processed foods. Many manufacturers are reducing the *trans* fat in products. It is recommended that you keep your intake of *trans* fats as low as possible. Look for foods that contain 0g *trans* fat.

What are *trans* fats?

The fat in food is slightly altered as a result of the process of hydrogenation of oils and fats. These altered fats are called *trans* fats. The amount of *trans* fats formed depends on the amount of hydrogenation. *Trans* fat acts much like saturated fat in the body.

What foods contain *trans* fats?

Check the Nutrition Facts food label to see if *trans* fat is listed with its amount present. There is no Daily Value (%DV) assigned to *trans* fat. So far, no Daily Value has been agreed upon. Establishing a Daily Value would help consumers put the product's *trans* fat content in perspective by indicating how much *trans* fat is present compared with a recommended daily amount.

If there is no amount of *trans* fat shown on the Nutrition Facts food label, there still can be a small amount present (up to 0.49 grams/ serving). Check the ingredient list for terms that indicate the presence of *trans* fat. They include terms like *hydrogenated oil*, *partially hydrogenated oil*, and *vegetable oil shortening*. While this will tell you that some *trans* fat is present, the amount is negligible or not enough to be important if the Nutrition Facts on the food label shows no amount present.

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Trans fat can be found throughout the food groups, especially where foods have been processed by hydrogenation.

Trans fats are often found in foods with saturated fats, including vegetable shortening, some margarines, crackers, candies, cookies, snack foods, fried foods, baked goods, salad dressings, and other processed foods like pizza, fried chicken, spring rolls, buttered popcorn, fruit roll-ups, and chips. In fact margarine is a major source with stick margarine generally higher than tub margarine. For example, some stick margarines provide 2.5 grams per serving while some tub margarines have none.

Trans fats are found in the oils widely used in restaurants for frying a variety of foods, including donuts, French fries, onions, and breaded fish. They do not have to provide nutrition labels. You can ask if *trans* fats were used in preparing the food; however knowing that won't tell you how much is in your food.

Trans fats also are found in desserts like cakes, danishes, and pies. *Trans* fats occur naturally (without hydrogenation) but in a very small amount in milk, beef, and other foods. It would take many pounds of beef to get the amount of *trans* fat that can be found in one serving of some manufactured products.

Trans fats are not naturally found in fruits and vegetables. So eat more of these.

To lower your risk for heart disease, eat fewer foods containing saturated fats, *trans* fats, and cholesterol. Some foods that have 0 grams of *trans* fat per serving on their Nutrition Facts label may contain high amounts of fat, saturated fat, and/or cholesterol. So be sure to read the label for all of these ingredients.

It is especially important to read labels so you can:

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Eat as Little *Trans* Fat as Possible!

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Prepared by
Jacquelyn McClelland, Food and Nutrition Specialist
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, NC State University

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