

PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET



COUNTY MICHIGAN
HEALTH DIVISION

Department of Health & Human Services

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Trans Fats

What are *Trans* Fats?

Artificial *trans* fats are made when hydrogen is added to liquid vegetable oil, a process called hydrogenation. About 80 percent of the *trans* fats Americans eat come from partially hydrogenated vegetable oil.

Are *Trans* Fats harmful?

Trans fats, like saturated fat and cholesterol, raise bad LDL cholesterol that causes arteries to become clogged and increases the risk of heart disease and stroke. *Trans* fats go a step further and deplete the healthy HDL cholesterol that helps protect against heart disease. Kids who eat a steady diet of foods with *trans* fats can be expected to get heart disease earlier than kids who eat foods without *trans* fats.

Why have *Trans* Fats been put in many food products?

Food manufacturers started putting *trans* fats in products because it allows for a longer shelf life and gives food a desirable taste, shape, and texture.

What steps can you take against *Trans* Fats?

1. Make healthy food choices. Foods naturally low in fat are generally the best choices (fruits, vegetables, whole grains).
2. Read food labels. Learn how to identify high fat and *trans* fats foods. *Trans* fats are listed under the fat category of the Nutrition Facts panel.
3. Learn the types of foods that are likely to have *trans* fats such as fried foods and prepared baked goods (cookies, cakes, muffins, crackers). If partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is one of the ingredients listed, it contains *trans* fats.

Choose alternative fats. When possible, replace saturated and *trans* fats in your diet with mono- and polyunsaturated fats like olive oil, canola oil, soybean oil, sunflower oil, and corn oil. These fats do not raise LDL cholesterol levels and have health benefits when eaten in moderation.

Sources: University of Maryland Medical Center
FDA

For more information on *Trans* Fats, call (248) 858-1406 or toll free 1 (800) 848-5533.

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