



Trans Fat Information Sheet

What is Trans Fat?

Trans Fatty Acids or Trans fat is made when hydrogen is added to vegetable oil, a process that is called hydrogenation. Oil manufacturers hydrogenate oil in order to increase the shelf life and the flavor stability of the foods that are made with them. Most trans fat is formed when manufacturers turn liquid oil into solid fats like shortening and margarine, however small amounts of Trans fat is found in some animal products like butter, cheese and beef. Traditionally foods like cookies, crackers, snack foods, fried foods, baked goods and salad dressings contain some amounts of Trans fat.

What's So Bad About Trans Fat?

While Trans fats start out “healthy” oils that are unsaturated, when hydrogenated, they become bad for your health. Trans fats raise the level of “bad cholesterol” or LDL (Low-density lipoprotein) in the blood stream. LDL is the major “carrier” of cholesterol which over time can form plaque and clog the arteries. In addition Trans fats lower the “good cholesterol” or HDL (High-density lipoprotein) in the blood. It’s the HDL that attaches to cholesterol and carries it away from the arteries. By increasing the LDL cholesterol and lowering the HDL cholesterol, Trans fats are bad news. Long term studies conducted at Harvard have directly linked Trans fat as another risk factor for heart disease.

What About Saturated Fat?

Saturated fats are fats that are naturally solid at room temperature. Saturated fats usually come from animal sources like beef, milk and cheese, but also are in certain plant oils like palm, coconut, and cocoa butter. Saturated fats increase the level of “bad cholesterol” (LDL) in the blood which can lead to heart disease. However, unlike Trans fats, some studies show that Saturated fats actually raise the “good cholesterol” in the bloodstream.

How Much Trans Fat is Too Much?

Current research is being conducted and will be evaluated before a daily allowance is recommended by the FDA and other organizations. However, the American Heart Association has made the following recommendations:

- Saturated fat plus Trans fat should not exceed 10% of the total daily caloric intake for a healthy adult.
- Saturated fat intake should be less than 7% of the daily caloric intake for an adult with high cholesterol, diabetes, or heart disease.

Using these two recommendations, many experts have recommended a daily intake of Trans fat of less than 3% of their daily calories.

Regulatory, Consumers and Industry Response

In July of 2003, the FDA published a final rule that required manufacturers to list Trans fat on their Nutrition Facts Panel of conventional foods. Trans fat labeling became mandatory for retail items in 2006.

Becoming more aware of the risk of Trans fat, consumers are demanding a reduction or elimination of the Trans fat levels in the foods they love. The snack food industry has felt the consumer pressure and many companies have eliminated Trans fat from their most popular items. Oil manufactures are developing vegetable oils with lower or no Trans fat. .

What is the T. Marzetti Company Doing about Trans Fat?

The T. Marzetti Company, as always, is responsive to developing trends, new scientific data and the changing demands of consumers. Food scientists at the T. Marzetti Company are successfully working to lower or eliminate the Trans fat in products that currently contain Trans fat without compromising flavor and product quality.