

Healthy, Happy Hearts

From the desk of Volunteer, Michelle Kelly RDN, LD

Trans Fat, Know the Facts

Trans fat is one factor to be aware of if your doctor tells you to lower your blood cholesterol (ko-LES-ter-ol). What is trans fat? Where does trans fat come from? Why should I limit my trans fat? How do I reduce my trans fat intake?

What is trans fat?

Trans fat is created when hydrogen is added to liquid vegetable oil to make them more solid. If you see “partially hydrogenated oils” on a label that is also trans fat.

Where does trans fat come from?

Trans fat comes from a variety of foods but is common in store bought foods such as: crackers, cookies, and stick margarines. They can also be found in fried foods like french fries and donuts.

Why should I limit my trans fat?

Trans fat raise your bad (LDL) cholesterol levels and lower your good (HDL) cholesterol levels. Eating trans fats put you at a higher risk for heart disease and stroke. It also puts you at higher risk for type 2 diabetes.

How do I reduce my trans fat intake?

- Keep total fat intake to 20-35% of your total calories.
- Eat more fruits, veggies, and whole grains (bread and cereal).
- Try to boil, broil, bake, roast, poach, steam, or sauté foods.
- Use liquid oils when cooking.
- Limit foods that have partially hydrogenated oils in the ingredient list.
- Limit commercial baked good (ie. Cookies and pies).
- Limit pre-packaged food.
- Limit frozen dinners.
- Limit fried foods.
- Limit fast food.

Better fats to know.

- *Polyunsaturated fatty acids* – are mostly liquid on the counter or in the fridge. Buy oils like soybean, corn, or safflower. They are also found in tuna, salmon, herring, trout, and mackerel.
- *Monounsaturated fatty acids* – are mostly liquid on the counter but get firm in the fried. Buy oils like olive and canola. They are also found in avocados, peanut butter, nuts, and seeds.

Other fat to watch.

- *Saturated fatty acids* – are found in foods from animals (eg red meat and whole milk dairy products. Found in oils like palm, kernel and coconut. Like trans fat they are found in commercial baked goods.

Resources: American Heart Association @ http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HealthyEating/Trans-Fats_UCM_301120_Article.jsp

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Thank you!

Questions? If you have any questions on this or any nutrition-related topic, or have an idea for a future *Healthy Bite* topic, please call our registered dietitian, Lori Harvey. You can reach her by telephone at 330-376-7717 extension 140 or by email lharvey@mobilemealsinc.org.

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