

# The Marketplace for Trans Fat Replacements

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# The Issue of Trans Fats is Red Hot

- FDA began requiring food packages to list levels of trans fat on January 1, 2006.
- Average intake of trans fats is estimated at 2.6 % of daily energy intake. The negative effects of trans fat on blood lipids starts as low as 0.5 percent of daily energy intake.
- 80 percent of trans fat in the diet comes from partially hydrogenated oils.

# Bottom Line: People Hate Trans Fats

- In January 2006, Harris Interactive survey of 1,040 U.S. adults. 46 percent of adults were familiar with the impact of trans fats on their health and 79 percent of those who were familiar were very or extremely concerned that these posed a health hazard.

# The Big Apple Takes on Trans Fat

- NYC Board of Health voted to phase out artificial trans fat from NYC's restaurants by July 1, 2008.
- Denmark limited trans fat to 2 percent of the fat content of foods two years ago.
- California city of Tiburon, all of the 19 restaurants use trans fat-free cooking oil for frying.
- Other cities and states moving forward.

# October 30, 2006 NYC Public Hearing

- By the most conservative estimates, based only on the effects of trans fats on blood total cholesterol and HDL cholesterol levels, 6 percent of heart attacks in the U.S. are due to consumption of artificial trans fats. In NYC, this corresponds to approximately 1,400 deaths from heart attacks each year.  
Dariush Mozaffarian

# Trans Fat Taboo in Food Products

- Much progress to remove trans fats in food industry. Goldfish crackers to Oreos taste virtually the same in zero trans fat form.
- Still many products have done little to reduce trans fat.
- A recent limited supermarket survey by CSPI found at least 150 varieties of pot pies, microwave popcorn, frozen pizzas, pastries, cookies and convenience foods have a whole day's worth of trans fat.

# Supermarket Chains Making Progress

- Whole Foods never sold foods with partially hydrogenated oil.
- Wegman's has been making gradual changes for years.
- Raley's and Giant chains have asked suppliers to make changes.
- Nine out of eleven supermarket chains surveyed by CSPI made changes or plan on doing so for store-brand products.

# Trans Fat Labeling Loopholes

- The FDA allows manufacturers to round down a trans fat level of below .5 grams and list it as zero on the label.
- Many popular vegetable oil spreads that claim "0 grams trans fat" contain significant levels of trans fat, according to laboratory analyses.

# Trans Fat on the Menu

- Much resistance by many restaurants to go trans fat-free.
- French fries and chicken nuggets from U.S. fast food restaurants have 5 to 10 g of trans fats per serving.
- In July, NYC Burger King fries contain 3.3 grams of trans fat per serving.

# Restaurants Making Strides

- Taco Bell announced that it will convert its more than 4,200 single brand U.S. restaurants to a zero grams trans fat canola oil for frying by April 2007 nationwide.
- KFC announced that it is converting all of its 5,500 restaurants in the U.S. to a zero grams trans fat cooking oil, low linolenic soybean oil, by the end of April 2007 nationwide.
- Wendy's replacing trans fat-containing frying oils with no increase in the saturated fat content of their products.

# Hospitals Trans Fat Safe Haven?

- CSPI commissioned independent laboratory analyses of French fries from hospital cafeterias in order to determine the type of oil used for deep-frying, discovering that 18 of the nation's top hospitals were serving foods prepared with partially hydrogenated oil.

# The Horizon for Trans Fat Replacements

- In 2005, it is estimated that the country consumed between 6 to 7 billion pounds of partially hydrogenated oil.
- By reducing trans fat in food products, there can be many changes in the product including aeration capability changes, loss of volume, appearance change, greasy or oily handling character, interaction with the water component of dough or batter, reduction of shelf-life, loss of softness, crispy texture, off flavor, differing coating effect of eating quality, and flavor development in the frying process.

# Trans Fats Alternatives

- Four areas of trans fat alternatives currently in use.
  - Naturally stable oils such as palm, coconut, palm kernel, high oleic sunflower, corn, peanut, low linolenic soy, and high or mid oleic canola oils.
  - Trait-enhanced oils in which traits are placed into oilseed varieties in order to make them more stable. These oils include low linolenic soybean and high oleic canola oil.
  - Mixing fully hydrogenated hard stock (containing no trans fat) with unhydrogenated oil.
  - Altering the hydrogenation process in fats so that trans fat is reduced.

# Health Concerns Arise from Trans Fat Replacements

- Health organizations concerned that the decrease in trans fat use may prompt increase in saturated fat.
- Gram for gram, trans fat is worse than saturated fat, but if more than one gram of saturated fat is used to replace a gram of trans fat, then the benefits gained from replacing trans fat might quickly vanish.

# Turning to Palm Oil

- Food processors turning more frequently to palm oil for various applications due to its functionality and stability.
- Though saturated fatty acids are recognized to increase total and LDL cholesterol levels, not all saturated fatty acids are equally cholesterol-raising.
- Some studies have shown palm olein (found in palm oil) has beneficial effects on plasma cholesterol comparable to that of monounsaturated oils.

# Other Health Concerns Arise

- Artificial trans fat born when health organizations painted saturated fat as the “bad” fat.
- Experts concerned because effects of widespread increase in dietary interesterified fats on cardiovascular risk is not known.
- Concern surrounds genetic modification of a large volume of the plants grown to make new oils.

# On the Trans Fat Free Campaign Trail

- BanTransFat.com works to help food industry reduce and eliminate trans fat in the food supply and educate public.
- TransFreeAmerica (TransFreeAmerica.org) is a project of CSPI, which hopes to eliminate partially hydrogenated oil from the U.S. food supply. CSPI is pushing to revoke the "generally recognized as safe" status of partially hydrogenated oils, require restaurants to disclose the use of partially hydrogenated oils, ban "0 g trans fat" claims on foods that are not saturated fat-free, and allow "0 g trans fat" only on foods with less than 0.2 grams of trans fat as opposed to less than 0.5.