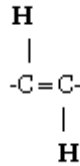


“Labeling of Trans Fat”



Trans arrangement of hydrogen atoms

Background: The purpose of the mandatory labeling of Trans fat on food packaging is to make the public more aware of what is in the products they are consuming. Trans fat is the most unhealthy and detrimental form of fat one can consume, so people need to be conscious of how much and what products it is in so they can reduce and hopefully eliminate the consumption of it. Wikipedia defines trans fat as “an unsaturated fatty acid whose molecules contain *trans* double bonds between carbon atoms” (Wikipedia, 2006) There is a definite link between the consumption of trans fat and diseases like atherosclerosis, coronary heart disease, cancer, and obesity. Trans fat is created by fusing air into normally healthy oils, which in turn makes them very unhealthy. After the addition of air, the oils are solid instead of liquid at room temperature. The process of hydrogenation began in 1902 by German chemist, Wilhelm Normann. The first and largest use of hydrogenated oils is in the product Crisco. The purpose of trans fat is to make products last longer on the shelves. It is what makes crackers crunchy and Oreo cookies creamy. Partially hydrogenated oils are much more cost effective for the food industry.

Starting in January of 2006, the Food and Drug Administration required food labels to contain trans fat content. However, restaurants do not need to denote this ingredient on their nutritional facts.

Trans fat is most commonly found in snack food, processed food, fried food, and baked goods.

Statement of the Problem: Trans fat greatly increases the consumer's chance of getting heart disease, cancer, atherosclerosis, and being obese. A large portion of Healthy People 2010 has to do with nutrition and weight. They want to reduce the number of obese people and increase the number of Americans who are at a healthy weight. They want to increase the number of children and teenagers who are a healthy weight and increase the consumption of fruits, vegetables and whole grains. By reducing the consumption of trans fat, people will be healthier because most foods that contain trans fats are extremely unhealthy.

Healthy People 2010 is using surveys such as National Health and Nutritional Examination Survey, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, and NCHS to track the progress.



Endorsement of Labeling: The US National Academy of Sciences recommended in 2002 that dietary intake of trans fat should be eliminated.

In 1992, Center for Science in the Public Interest, a non-profit group that centers around subjects regarding foods and the food services industry, recommended that their use be eliminated.

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that Americans consume as little trans fat as possible to prevent chronic disease, cancer (colon, prostate, lung, and endometrial) and heart disease (Fat Consumption, 2006.)

Epidemiologic Picture: This problem affects everyone, but it also has a big effect on poverty-stricken people because foods that contain trans fat are often less expensive than fresh, healthy food such as fruit. The policy has already started to make a difference because a few major corporations have discontinued the use of trans fat in their products.

Cholesterol consists of two parts – HDL, high density lipoprotein or good cholesterol, and LDL, low density lipoprotein or bad cholesterol. Trans fat lowers the HDL levels and increases LDL levels, which can lead to heart disease and many other diseases.

Solutions to the Problem:

“FDA estimates that 3 years after the effective date, January 2006, trans fat labeling would annually prevent from 600 to 1,200 heart attacks and save 250-500 lives. Based on this estimate, this rule will realize a cost savings of \$900 million to \$1.8 billion per year in medical costs, lost productivity, and pain and suffering.” (FDA, 2006)

Restaurants are not required to follow the labeling requirements, which is a big problem. Americans eat up to fifty percent of their meals out these days, so if restaurants are exempt from this rule, many people will still be consuming unknown amounts of trans fat. (FDA, 2006)

According to www.bantransfat.com, two chief problems with the labeling system are “Under FDA regulations, “if the serving contains less than 0.5 gram [of trans fat], the content, when declared, shall be expressed as zero.” Also, on food labels the percent daily values are not calculated under trans fat because there is no safe or recommended amount to eat besides as little as possible. Originally that caveat was to appear in place of a percent, but the food industry lobbied hard against it.



"How do you guys want your trans fatty acids prepared?"

Internet Resources:

http://progressreport.cancer.gov/doc_detail.asp?pid=1&did=2005&chid=21&coid=208&mid=

<http://www.healthypeople.gov/Document/html/tracking/od19.htm#weightstat>

<http://www.fda.gov/oc/initiatives/transfat/>

Cartoons source: <http://www.bantransfat.com>

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Fat consumption. (2005). Cancer Trends Progress Report - Fat Consumption.

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Prepared by Audrey Meyers for PCH 201-10, Spring 2006

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Healthy People. (n.d.). Nutrition and overweight. Retrieved Apr. 02, 2006, from

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trans_fat

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CLASS HANDOUT

“Trans Fat Labeling Fact Sheet”

- Wikipedia defines trans fat as “an [unsaturated fatty acid](#) whose [molecules](#) contain [trans double bonds](#) between [carbon atoms](#)” (Wikipedia, 2006)
- Purpose of the mandatory labeling of Trans fat on food packaging is to make the public more aware of what is in the products they are consuming
- Trans fat greatly increases its consumer’s chance of getting heart disease, cancer, [atherosclerosis](#), and being obese
- The U.S. National Academy of Science, the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and the Center for Science in the Public Interest all endorse eliminating the consumption of trans fat as much as possible
- Trans fat lowers the HDL levels and increases LDL levels, which can lead to heart disease and many other diseases.
- “FDA estimates that 3 years after the effective date, January 2006, trans fat labeling would annually prevent from 600 to 1,200 heart attacks and save 250-500 lives. Based on this estimate, this rule will realize a cost savings of \$900 million to \$1.8 billion per year in medical costs, lost productivity, and pain and suffering.” ([FDA](#), 2006)
- Trans fat is most commonly found in snack food, processed food, fried food, and baked goods.