

## **Abolishing Trans Fats, Risky Business**

Trying to alter American's favorite foods is extremely risky, even the mere suggestion of a change can have drastic effect on a food brand image. This fact holds true even if it is in the best interest of the consumer. Trans fats add texture, freshness and flavor. On the other hand, they also raise bad cholesterol and lower good cholesterol. This makes trans fats even more dangerous than saturated fats, some researchers say.

Until January 2006, when the federal regulators required manufacturers to start listing them on their products, consumers had no idea how much artery-clogging synthetic trans fats they were consuming. Some food companies such as Kraft and Unilever, chose to remove the fats rather than label them.

How much trans fats in a daily diet is safe? The American Heart Association recommends getting no more than one percent of daily calories from synthetic trans fats. That's about two grams for ever 2,000-calorie diet.

If trans fats are eliminated, what is the result? A recent study shows, as many as 72,000 heart attacks would be prevented yearly, estimated Harvard University scientists.

With statistics like those change is on the move. New York plans to begin banning trans fats in restaurants in July. Chicago, Seattle and others are considering such restrictions. Some states are following suit. Restaurant chains from KFC to Starbucks are working to remove the unhealthy oils.

Consumers are becoming very aware of the dangers of trans fats and how to detect them. Trans fats can be spotted in products under the ingredients labeled partially hydrogenated soybean oil. Grocery products and restaurants can now benefit from eliminating fats from the products in order to avoid the growing hazard. A handful of consumers have even gone as far as to file lawsuits over trans fats.

Big name companies are working very hard on ways to eliminate trans fats from the product. The search for a fat replacement starts at the farm. Food manufacturers are dropping partially hydrogenated soybean oil for sunflower or corn oil, or for soybean oil made from genetically modified plant. Seed developers and farmers are working to increase supply.

"It's not a change that can happen overnight," says Sue Hensley, National Restaurant Association spokeswoman.

Trying to substitute trans fats with other healthier oils and keeping the same traditional taste in product brand is the fine line companies must walk to appease both the consumers and safeguard their health.

**Where the trans fats are, in grams:**

Arby's Apple Turnover, 6

Chick-fil-A Chicken Biscuit, 3

Dunkin' Donuts Plain Croissant, 7

KFC Chicken Pot Pie, 14

Krispy Kreme Chocolate Iced Kreme Filled Doughnut, 6

McDonald's Large Fries, 8

Starbucks Espresso Fudge Brownie, 8

**Where they aren't:**

Arby's Medium Curly Fries

Chick-fil-A Chicken Sandwich

Dunkin' Donuts Blueberry Muffin

Panera Bread Cherry Pastry

Taco Bell Gordita Baja Chicken

Wendy's 5-piece Chicken Nuggets

None of the restaurant representatives interviewed would say how much they are spending to get rid of trans fats, and the National Restaurant Association says it doesn't have a figure for how much it is costing the industry overall. The conversion hasn't been swift. Some restaurants have been working for years on changes that are just now showing up on their menus.

All the restaurants are working very diligently on the trans fats problem and some of the restaurants have come up with trans fat-free alternatives, and it is only a matter of time till it reaches all of the restaurants across the nation.

FoodWise Group understands the marketing benefits when food companies eliminate trans fats. For more information, contact us at [www.foodwisegroup.com](http://www.foodwisegroup.com).

*Sources Include: Elizabeth Lee, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*