

Domination Over Hydrogenation: *Trans* Fat-Free Snacking

Artificial *trans* fats are oils injected with extra hydrogen so they can remain solid at room temperature. Although they were originally developed as a cheaper form of candle wax, they have been used extensively in packaged cookies, crackers, and fried foods. They have a very long shelf-life without spoiling because mold won't eat them – they are not digestible by humans either. Even in small amounts, they have terrible effects on cardiac health and the Harvard School of Public Health estimates that they are responsible for one death every 15 minutes. Even **1-2 grams per day** puts us at an increased risk for heart disease. That's the amount in 2 Oreos.

At CHPW, we believe they are PURE EEE-VIL.

Help us in our mission to get the TF out of snacks and study breaks this year.

The lazy (ahem, busy) person's guide to TFs:

- **Look for any packages that scream “0 grams of *trans* fat!”**
 - Whole Foods, Trader Joe's, and the Wild Harvest section of Star Market/Shaw's are pretty much TF-free
 - Honey Maid Cinnamon Grahams and Fig Newtons
 - Nestlé candy bars
 - Pepperidge Farm Goldfish, Triscuits, Cheese Nips
 - All Frito Lay chips – such as Doritos, Fritos, Cheetos, Tostitos, Ruffles, Lay's Potato Chips – yes, even Funyuns (does anyone over the age of 8 eat those?)

The (slightly) more time-consuming guide to TFs:

- **Read your ingredients labels.** In the U.S., even products with .49 grams of TFs per serving can technically say “0 grams.” Remember, small amounts are still EEE-VIL.
 - Look for the words “**partially-hydrogenated**” or “hydrogenated” in the ingredients list and when you see it, **PUT THE PACKAGE DOWN. Step away.**
 - In addition to **cookies and crackers**, read labels for: cake and brownie mixes, cans of frosting, pie crusts, packaged cookie dough, frozen cakes, frozen pizzas or pizza crusts, mac and cheese, taco shells, ramen and soup mixes.
 - If you are getting catering or restaurant food, do not be afraid to ask about TFs.

Restaurant Info

Trans fats have been banned at restaurants in New York City, and Massachusetts is in the process of implementing similar legislation. Papa John's Pizza, Wendy's, Chili's, and Sonic have been using trans-fat-free oil since 2006. McDonald's introduced a more healthful oil in 2007 that is being used in about one-fourth of its U.S. restaurants. KFC and Taco Bell are trans-fat-free for most products except chicken pot pie and a few other items. Burger King said it was going to *trans* fat-free frying in 2007, but it will still allow its french fries to be partially fried in *trans* fat.

Want more information on this topic?

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