

Frying Without The Trans Fats

(NAPSA)—Trans fats are in the news a lot these days because a new regulation requiring that they be included on food nutrition labels is now in effect. Trans fats are created when liquid oils are made into solids by a process called partial hydrogenation. This increases shelf life and flavor stability, but at the cost of increased health risks.

These fats have been found to raise blood levels of LDL (or “bad”) cholesterol. That means a significantly increased risk of heart disease.

Partially hydrogenated vegetable fats are present in about 40 percent of the food on grocery store shelves. Cookies, crackers, and microwave popcorn are big sources of trans fats, as are other processed foods such as margarines, butter-type spreads and cooking or baking shortenings, salad dressings, cakes, donuts, snack chips, chocolate candy, some breakfast cereals, French fries and other fried snack foods. As of January 2006, manufacturers are required to list trans fats as part of the nutritional information box on all food labels.

That’s why there’s a movement to reduce and eliminate trans fats from foods.

The new regulation doesn’t apply yet to foods people buy in restaurants and other away-from-home eateries. However, food-service operators—including the big fast-food chains—know that they share the responsibility for providing good food that can be part of a healthy diet.

Most of the 925,000 restaurants in the U.S. have fryers, and those fryers use almost 18,000 tons of fat each year, much of it partially hydrogenated fat and oils. These restaurants are looking at ways to reduce trans fats in their menu items without cutting out taste,



About 40 percent of the food on grocery store shelves—and much of the fried foods on restaurant menus—is made with trans fat-containing partially hydrogenated vegetable fats.

and that includes finding alternatives to partial hydrogenates.

One alternative gaining interest is an oil called low-linolenic soybean oil, made from a specially bred soybean. It was developed specifically to replace partially hydrogenated oils and can be used alone or in blends with other vegetable oils that have low or no trans fats to decrease or even eliminate trans fats in the foods fried in it.

To protect your health when you choose foods to enjoy at home, read the nutrition information panel and the ingredient label on packaged foods. And when you dine out, ask what sort of oil the restaurant is using. In both cases, you want to avoid partially hydrogenated oils and tropical oils (which contain high levels of unhealthy saturated fats). When you see “low-linolenic soybean oil,” you know you’ll be eating healthy.

For more information on trans fat reduction, visit the Web site www.ZeroTransSoy.com.