

The truth about Trans Fats

Trans fats can be natural or artificial. Small amounts of trans fat occur naturally in beef and dairy foods. Artificial trans fats are made when hydrogen gas reacts with oil. They can be found in some cookies, crackers, icing, potato chips, stick margarine and microwave popcorn. Please read labels to decide which products contain trans fats. About 80 percent of trans fat in American's diet comes from factory-produce partially hydrogenated vegetable oil.

Many manufacturers started including trans fats in their processed foods about 20 years ago to prolong their products' shelf life, but recently public health experts warn that these kinds of fats clog arteries and cause obesity.

Trans fats pose a higher risk of heart disease than saturated fats, which were once believed to be the worst kind of fats. While it is true that saturated fats -- found in butter, cheese and beef, for example -- raise total cholesterol levels, trans fats go a step further. Trans fats not only raise total cholesterol levels, they also deplete good cholesterol (HDL), which helps protect against heart disease.

For more information on Trans Fats, visit the following websites:

<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4776>

http://www.fda.gov/FDAC/features/2003/503_fats.html