



# Just the Facts!

## Trim Trans Fat for Healthier School Meals

### KEY ISSUES:

- Most Americans, including children, need to decrease their intake of *trans* fat.
- A high intake of *trans* fat, as well as saturated fat, may increase the risk of coronary heart disease.
- Schools should serve meals with no added *trans* fat. Help protect students' hearts by serving foods containing or prepared with healthy oils rather than *trans* fats.

**W**e know that fats and oils are a part of a healthful diet, but the type of fat makes a difference to heart health. Most Americans need to decrease their intakes of foods containing *trans* fat to lower the risk of heart disease. Get your oils from fish, avocados, and liquid oils, such as corn oil, soybean oil, olive oil, and canola oil.

Although a small amount of *trans* fat is found naturally in foods like meat, butter, and dairy products, most *trans* fat is formed during processing -- hydrogen is added to an oil to make a more solid fat, like shortening or margarine. This process, called "hydrogenation," increases shelf life and helps maintain the flavor and texture of foods. Many manufacturers have reduced or removed *trans* fat from their food products, but it is still important to read the food labels.

The school meal patterns require that schools eliminate products with added *trans* fat. Check the Nutrition Facts labels and note the amount of "*trans* fat" listed. Naturally occurring *trans* fat is allowable.

Easy ways to follow the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 10g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A 4%	Vitamin C 2%
Calcium 20%	Iron 4%

### Recipe for Success

- **Write specifications for food products** with no artificial *trans* fat.
- **Check Nutrition Facts labels and ingredient lists** on similar foods. Choose the food with zero *trans* fat. Review nutrition labels frequently, as products change regularly. Foods that list "shortening" or "partially hydrogenated vegetable oil" as an ingredient contain *trans* fat.
- **When purchasing foods, look for products with no *trans* fat.** Look for manufacturers that have eliminated *trans* fat in their products.
- **Serve nonbreaded meat products**, which usually contain less *trans* fat than breaded products. Grill, bake, or broil these foods to lower the fat content further.

## USDA Foods Program

USDA eliminated *trans* fat from its peanut butter and frozen potato products, and stopped offering solid shortening and butter many years ago. For more information about USDA Foods products and updates on efforts to reduce *trans* fat in other popular products, check out the USDA Foods Toolkit at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/healthy/Professional.htm> to review the Foods Available List for Schools.

- **Offer fruit for dessert** to satisfy students' taste for sweet foods.
- **Discontinue the sale of à la carte snacks** containing *trans* fat such as certain types of cakes, cookies, and crackers.
- **Take the HealthierUS School Challenge!** Go for the Gold and offer meals that include more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, which are naturally low in *trans* fat <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/healthierus/index.html>.



### For More Information:

**Team Nutrition** (<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>)  
**USDA Choose MyPlate** ([www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov))  
**MyPlate** (<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/myplate.html>)  
**Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Trans Fat at-a-Glance**  
(<http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm079609.htm>)  
**Trimming the Fat** (<http://www.nfsmi.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20120102035517.pdf>)

## Messages for Students

- **Check the Nutrition Facts label and choose foods with zero grams of *trans* fat.** Choose fewer foods that have the words “shortening” and “partially hydrogenated vegetable oil” on the ingredients list.
- **Pay attention to the amount of *trans* fat in the foods you eat.** Eating foods made with *trans* fat may increase your risk of heart disease. The extra calories from *trans* fat also make it harder for you to grow at a healthy weight.

## Did You Know?

- ***Trans* fat can be found in many of the same foods as saturated fat.** *Trans* fats are also solid at room temperature. Examples include stick margarine, shortening, and ready-to-use frostings.
- **Eating foods containing *trans* fat is associated with higher levels of total cholesterol** and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol in the blood. Higher total and LDL cholesterol levels can put people at greater risk for heart disease. Too much LDL cholesterol can slowly clog the arteries supplying blood to the heart and brain. This increases your risk for a heart attack or stroke.

