



BRRR! Winter is back! These really cold temps seem to zap any motivation for doing outdoor activity and often it's not safe if you aren't taking precautions. It's time to get creative to find ways to stay active indoors. At Iowa State we are lucky to have some large buildings which can be used for indoor walking. Buildings that come to mind are MacKay, Beardshear, Curtis, Parks Library, Howe and Hoover Halls (with the cool skywalk!), Food Sciences Building, Gilman/Physics. If there are stairs in the building, this helps to increase the intensity of the work out. Beyond using indoor exercise equipment or visiting a gym or pool, other indoor exercise ideas might be exercise video tapes or exercise programs on TV (check out the listings!), calisthenics and jogging in place, weight training using free weights (or even cans of food), jump roping, dancing to faster music. Watching the Olympics on TV does not count as physical activity!! (Unless you can figure out a way to move your body while you watch!)

It's still February and National Heart Month so I want to give some tips today on Trans fatty acids (or Trans fats) in your diet.

Trans-fatty acid (TFA) are found in small amounts in various animal products such as beef, pork, lamb and the butterfat in dairy products. They are also formed during the process of "hydrogenation" which adds hydrogen and changes fats from a more liquid to a more solid form and making them into more harmful fats. Stick margarine, shortening, cooking oils and the foods made with these are a major source of TFA. Partially hydrogenated vegetable oils provide about three fourths of the TFA in the US diet (and that phrase is seen on many ingredient lists of processed foods!)

#### **How are trans-fatty acids harmful?**

The concern is that in clinical studies, TFA or hydrogenated fats tend to raise blood cholesterol levels. Some scientists believe they are more dangerous in this regard than saturated fats. TFA raise LDL ("bad") cholesterol and lower HDL ("good") cholesterol levels. This may increase the risk of heart disease.

#### **Where are the most TFA found in our diets?**

Vegetable shortenings, some margarines, baked goods, crackers, cookies, snack foods, and other foods made with or fried in partially hydrogenated oils (fast foods). Small amounts of naturally occurring trans fat can be found in some animal products, such as butter, milk products, cheese, beef, and lamb.

Now the FDA requires trans fats to be listed on the nutrition label so we are more aware of food products that contain TFA. However, fast foods contain high levels of TFA and they don't require labels (a large order of fast food French fries contains 4-7g of TFA). There are other foods high in TFA that also would not be labeled (for example, pastries, cookies or donuts purchased from a bakery).

**How can you best reduce TFA in your diet?** The American Heart Association has these suggestions:

1. Use unhydrogenated oil for cooking and baking such as canola or olive oil.
2. Use margarine instead of butter. Choose a soft tub or liquid margarine labeled "trans fat free" and containing no more than 2 grams of saturated fat per tablespoon. It's best if the first ingredient is a liquid vegetable oil (such as Promise, Fleishman's, and Canola Harvest). If you are watching your calories, choose the "light" (lower calorie) version.
3. Limit the saturated fat in your diet and this will help to also limit the TFA. Saturated fat is found in animal foods like fatty cuts of meat, poultry with the skin on, whole-milk dairy products and in tropical oils such as coconut, palm kernel and palm oils.
4. Eat commercially fried foods, including fast food and commercial baked goods infrequently.
5. Become a label reader and so you can limit both trans fat and saturated fat in your diet!

**Is it possible for a food product to list the amount of *Trans* fat as 0 g on the Nutrition Facts panel if the ingredient list indicates that it contains "partially hydrogenated vegetable oil?"**

Food manufacturers are allowed to list amounts of trans fat with less than 0.5 gram (1/2 g) as 0 (zero) on the Nutrition Facts panel. As a result, consumers may see a few products that list 0 gram trans fat on the label, while the ingredient list will have "shortening" or "partially hydrogenated vegetable oil" on it. This means the food contains very small amounts (less than 0.5 g) of trans fat per serving. However, if you are eating many of these foods with small amounts of trans fats, your trans fat intake over time may be higher than desired.

**Your goal should be to minimize the intake of both trans fat and saturated fat. And remember that the bottom line is still total caloric intake."**

**The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low- and non-fat dairy products, legumes and fish. What Americans need to do is focus on overall lifestyle patterns, move around more, and eat a healthy diet.**

\*\*\*If you are interested in learning more about heart healthy eating, register for the February lunch-and-learn, "Eating to Keep Your Heart Content" by responding to this e-mail or calling 4-9625. It will be Thursday, February 23 from noon to 1 PM in 0331 Palmer Building (ground floor). Please feel free to bring your lunch!

I hope each of you have a healthy and enjoyable weekend!!

Sally

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