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# What Is Trans Fat

It's everywhere now, isn't it? The hype about trans fats that is. But what is trans fat?

It's all very well to say "Zero Trans fat!" or "Now with 50% less Trans fat!" But we need an answer to the question... **What is trans fat?**

Many food products available make these claims, in fact, if a product contains trans fat it is now compulsory to indicate that in the nutritional data. But the whole trans fat debate is new to the weight loss industry and so far there is little information available to explain what trans fat is.

For many people the trans fat debate came out of nowhere leaving their heads spinning. Suddenly, nutritionists and physicians were admonishing us regarding the importance of trans fats and telling us to remove them from our diets, but why?

So you can avoid the insanity of the whole "trans fats hysteria" that exists, this post will answer the question, 'What is trans fat' and why you should avoid it.

Trans fats are one of four main fat types the body absorbs through foods, predominantly foods cooked with hydrogenated oils. What are hydrogenated oils you ask. Hydrogenation is defined by [Wikipedia](#) as "the chemical reaction that results from the addition of hydrogen (H<sub>2</sub>). The process is usually employed to reduce or saturate organic compounds." Hydrogenation is widely applied to the processing of vegetable oils and fats. Complete hydrogenation converts unsaturated fatty acids to saturated ones.

Trans fats are helpful for manufacturers because they increase the shelf life of certain products, but they are extremely unhealthy for the body. Scientists believe that high levels of trans fat in the diet damages cell structure which makes it difficult for cells to process certain vital nutrients like sodium, potassium, calcium, and even magnesium. It also weakens the body and creates a vulnerability to free radicals (Naturally occurring chemicals frequently containing oxygen that are produced when molecules are split to produce products with unpaired electrons - otherwise known as oxidation. Free radicals can damage important cellular molecules such as DNA or lipids or other parts of the cell). This can lead to the aggravation of certain health conditions like cancer, arthritis, and primarily, heart disease.

Trans fats are now believed to do the most damage to the body by raising LDL levels ('low density lipoproteins' or bad cholesterol) in your body. Increased levels of LDL result in increased vulnerability to heart disease and atherosclerosis... a condition that causes fatty plaque to be deposited on the inside walls of arteries and causing arterial narrowing which can lead to heart attacks. For those who already have heart disease, trans fats further aggravate it.

For this reason we are now being encouraged to find alternatives to frying for cooking such as grilling, poaching, steaming and braising to avoid using oils that are high in trans fat.

That is why it is now compulsory to indicate trans fat content on food product labels . To be more health conscious, we should check the nutritional information on product labels and shift away from using oils containing trans fats in order to avoid the problems that come along with trans fat.

This post titled "What is trans fat" is not medical advice and should not be substituted for professional medical advice. It is for informational purposes only.

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