

Trans fat essay

Law



Trans fat is produced when vegetable oils are mixed with hydrogen in a process commonly known as hydrogenation. It is mainly used in mass-manufactured food products to retain the flavor and taste for longer periods of time, while also preserving it from going bad. Margarine, chips and other similar snack items are some of the food stuffs that use these hydrogenated oils. This article is primarily targeted towards health-conscious consumers who would like to educate themselves about the perils of trans fat and ways to stay away from it. There is an alarming need for the consumer to make wise food-related decisions, as increased levels of trans fat and other saturated fats in the blood have made millions of Americans victims of heart disease. These unhealthy fatty acids increase the level of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) in the human body which leads to several heart-related ailments.

Although saturated fats are consumed in greater quantities and likely to inflict more harm to our health, unsaturated fats in meager quantities is required by the body to absorb vitamins and provide energy. According to new FDA regulation, food products manufacturer are required by law to mention information pertaining to trans fat content on the food label. Thus, it is the duty of consumers to clearly comprehend these labels and make appropriate decisions, which could eventually lower blood cholesterol levels on the long run.

The Nutritional Facts Panel is the consumer's guide to understanding the composition of food they eat. Hence, comparing food items based on their total content of cholesterol, saturated fats and trans fat is the best way to buy the healthiest choice available. One also has to take the percent daily

value (%DV) of cholesterol and saturated fats in the food product to comply with FDA's dietary recommendations. This would also put the consumer in position to make smart tradeoffs between healthy and delicious food (Revealing Trans Fat 2003). Reference Revealing Trans Fat.

Excerpt from FDA Consumer, Oct 2003: 12-18.