

Are All Fats Bad.....Keeping *Trans* Fats in Focus



Adapted from the ADA's Fact Sheet Messages

Not all fat is bad. Actually, certain kinds of fat play an important role in health. It's important to understand the difference in saturated, unsaturated and *trans* fats.

- **Saturated fats and *trans* fats can increase blood cholesterol levels and increase the risk of heart disease.** It's important to limit the amount of these fats in your diet. Saturated fats are found mainly in meat, poultry, butter, whole milk and coconut, palm and palm kernel oils. According to the 2005 Dietary Guidelines, Americans should limit their intake of fats and oils high in saturated and/or *trans* fats by choosing foods low in these fats.
- **Polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats are beneficial forms of fat that promote heart health.** These fats help lower blood cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease. Sources include fish, nuts, avocado, olives, flax, canola, olive and vegetable oils.

What is a *Trans* Fat?

While *trans* fats are found naturally in some foods, the major source in the diet is partially hydrogenated oil. By selecting foods carefully, you can minimize your consumption of *trans* fats. Examples of foods that may contain *trans* fats are:

- Cookies
- Crackers
- Muffins
- Potato Chips
- Stick Margarine

New products are now available in the supermarket that are labeled *trans* fat free. However, some products that are *trans* fat-free may still be high in saturated fat, calories or added sugars. Check the Nutrition Facts Panel on the food label for total fat, saturated fat and *trans* fat, as well as calories and other nutrients.

A healthy eating plan is one that:

- Is low in saturated fats, *trans* fats, cholesterol, salt and added sugars
- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts