



Transitioning away from trans fat in schools



Healthy Food for Healthy Schools Act (Bill 8), limits artificial trans fats in all elementary and secondary schools. This applies to the preparation and sale of all food and beverages sold in schools for school purposes and includes cafeterias, tuck shops, canteens, bake sales, and vending machines. This applies only to products containing artificial trans fats, and does not include foods that only contain natural trans fats (some meats and dairy products).

The amount of artificial trans fat in a food product must **NOT** exceed:

- 2% of the total fat content for vegetable oils and soft spreadable margarines
- 5% of the total fat content in all other foods, beverages, and ingredients

Why is it Important to Limit Artificial Trans Fat?

Eating foods that contain artificial trans fats can increase levels of unhealthy cholesterol (LDL) and decrease levels of healthy cholesterol (HDL) in the blood. This can increase the risk of developing heart disease. Since children spend a large part of their day at school, limiting trans fats in food choices can help them make healthier food choices that promote their growth and development.

Exceptions to the Act

- 1) Special event days chosen by the principal (maximum 10 per year).
- 2) Foods sold on school property but not for a school purpose (example: if a community group is having an event in the school gym).
- 3) Fundraising off school property (example: selling chocolate bars door-to-door).
- 4) Foods that students bring from home to eat at school.

Although these activities don't fall under the regulations, we highly encourage meeting the regulation whenever possible. For example, when fundraising, some schools may use products like chocolate bars or cookie dough where the artificial trans fat does not exceed 5% of the total fat content. Also, some principals have decided not to make an exception for special event days. Instead, they will always be choosing foods that meet the regulations—even during special events.

What about bake sales?

Parents are encouraged to bake with ingredients that don't contain artificial trans fats. For example, when baking cookies, use non-hydrogenated margarine instead of shortening.

NOURISHING NOTES



Finding Out If Foods Meet the Trans Fat Regulation

3 Easy Steps



Example: Digestive Cookies

INGREDIENT LIST: ENRICHED WHEAT FLOUR, CHOCOLATEY COATING (SUGAR, **HYDROGENATED PALM KERNEL OIL**, COCOA, MILK INGREDIENTS, SOYA LECITHIN, ARTIFICIAL FLAVOUR), **VEGETABLE OIL SHORTENING**, SUGAR, GOLDEN SYRUP, WHEAT BRAN, MODIFIED MILK INGREDIENTS, MALT AND CORN EXTRACT, SALT, SODIUM BICARBONATE, WHEAT STARCH, AMMONIUM BICARBONATE.

1

STEP 1: What's in it?

Check the ingredient list on the food label. If any of the ingredients use the words **partially hydrogenated**, **hydrogenated**, or **shortening**, the food contains artificial trans fats. Since these digestive cookies contain artificial trans fats, you now have to figure out if it meets the regulation.

2

STEP 2: How much trans fat does it have?

Look at the product's Nutrition Facts table. Find the total fat, and then the trans fat. These cookies have 6g total fat and 1g trans fat.

To find the percentage of trans fat, divide the trans fat by the total fat, and multiply by 100%:

$$\frac{1\text{g}}{6\text{g}} \times 100\% = 17\%$$

Nutrition Fact table:

	Amount	% DV*
Total Fat	6g	9%
Sat Fat	2.5g	12%
Trans Fat	1g	

3

STEP 3: Does it meet the Bill 8 regulation?

Is the food product a vegetable oil or soft spreadable margarine?

YES

It must be less than or equal to 2% trans fat to meet the regulation.

NO

It must be less than or equal to 5% trans fat to meet the regulation (the cookies are 17%, so they do not meet the regulation).



References:
Wynne K, Minister of Education. (2008). **Healthy Food for Healthy Schools Act**. Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Health Canada (2005). *Trans fat task force*. Retrieved January 2009, from http://www.he-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/gras-trans-fats/tfff_interim_report_rapport_preliminaire-eng.php

©Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, May 2009