



All About Trans Fats

From the American Heart Association 9/07:


<http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3045792>What are *trans* fats?

 *Trans* fats (or *trans* fatty acids) are created in an industrial process that adds hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid. Another name for *trans* fats is “partially hydrogenated oils.” Look for them on the ingredient list on food packages.

How do *trans* fats affect my health?

 *Trans* fats raise your bad (LDL) cholesterol levels and lower your good (HDL) cholesterol levels. Eating *trans* fats increases your risk of developing heart disease and stroke. It’s also associated with a higher risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

How much *trans* fat can I eat a day?

 The American Heart Association recommends limiting the amount of *trans* fats you eat to less than 1 percent of your total daily calories. That means if you need 2,000 calories a day, no more than 20 of those calories should come from *trans* fats. That’s less than 2 grams of *trans* fats a day. Given the amount of naturally occurring *trans* fats you probably eat every day, this leaves virtually no room at all for industrially manufactured *trans* fats.

From the Mayo Clinic:

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/trans-fat/CL00032>

Other effects of trans fat

Doctors are most concerned about the effect of trans fat on cholesterol. However, trans fat has also been shown to have some other harmful effects:

- **Increases triglycerides.** Triglycerides are another type of fat found in your blood. A high triglyceride level may contribute to hardening of the arteries (atherosclerosis) or thickening of the artery walls — which increases the risk of stroke, heart attack and heart disease.
- **Increases Lp(a) lipoprotein.** Lp(a) is a type of LDL cholesterol found in varying levels in your blood, depending on your genetic makeup. It’s unclear how high levels of Lp(a) — independent of other cholesterol levels — increases your risk of heart disease. More research is needed.
- **Causes more inflammation.** Trans fat may increase inflammation, which is a process by which your body responds to injury. It’s thought that inflammation plays a key role in the formation of fatty blockages in heart blood vessels. Trans fat appears to damage the cells lining blood vessels, leading to inflammation.