

Trans Fat

What It Is

Trans fat is an unsaturated fat, but it is structurally different than unsaturated fat that occurs naturally in plant foods. *Trans* fat has **detrimental health effects** and is not essential in the diet.

There are **two sources** of *trans* fat:

- **Trans fat formed naturally** is produced in the stomach of ruminant animals (such as cattle and sheep).
- **Trans fat formed artificially during food processing** is created during a manufacturing process called “partial hydrogenation” in which hydrogen is added to liquid vegetable oil to make it more solid, and therefore more resistant to becoming spoiled or rancid. The process generally does not make the oil completely solid, resulting in “partially” hydrogenated oils.
- **Note:** most uses of partially hydrogenated oils, the major source of artificial *trans* fat in the U.S. food supply **have been phased out as of 2018**.

Where It Is Found

Trans fat formed naturally is found in small amounts in some animal products, such as dairy products, beef, and lamb.

Trans fat formed artificially during food processing is found in partially hydrogenated oils, which were used in a variety of foods, such as baked goods, coffee creamer, ready-to-use frostings, snack foods, and stick margarine. As of 2018, most uses of partially hydrogenated oils have been phased out. Additionally, refined vegetable oils may contain a small amount of *trans* fat as an unintentional byproduct of their manufacturing process.

What It Does

Partially hydrogenated oils were used by food manufacturers to improve the texture, shelf life, and flavor stability of foods. Partially hydrogenated oils should not be confused with “fully hydrogenated oils,” which are solid fats that contain very low levels of *trans* fat.

Nutrition Facts	
4 servings per container	
Serving size 1 1/2 cup (208g)	
Amount per serving	
Calories	240
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 4g	5%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 5mg	2%
Sodium 430mg	19%
Total Carbohydrate 46g	17%
Dietary Fiber 7g	25%
Total Sugars 4g	
Includes 2g Added Sugars	4%
Protein 11g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 6mg	35%
Potassium 240mg	6%
* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	



Health Facts

- According to the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, there is evidence that diets higher in *trans* fat are associated with increased blood levels of low-density lipoprotein (LDL or “bad”) cholesterol—which, in turn, are associated with an **increased risk of developing cardiovascular disease**. Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in both men and women in the U.S.
- On June 16, 2015, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration [took action](#) that significantly reduced the use of partially hydrogenated oils, which were the major source of artificial *trans* fats in the food supply. This action is expected to reduce cardiovascular disease and prevent thousands of fatal heart attacks each year in the U.S.

✓ Action Steps

For Monitoring *Trans* Fat in Your Diet

Use the **Nutrition Facts** label as a tool for monitoring consumption of *trans* fat formed artificially during food processing. The Nutrition Facts label on food and beverage packages shows the amount in grams (g) of *trans* fat per serving of the food.

Trans fat will not be completely gone from foods because it occurs naturally in small amounts in some animal products and is present at very low levels in refined vegetable oils.

***Trans* fat has no % Daily Value (%DV), so use the number of grams (g) to compare and choose foods.**