

The Oreo Cookie Story!

~ or when a label's not a label ~

What are *Trans* Fats?

Basically, *trans* fats are made when manufacturers add hydrogen to vegetable oil--a process called hydrogenation. Hydrogenation increases the shelf life and flavor stability of foods containing these fats.

Where can they be found?

Trans fat can be found in vegetable shortenings, some margarines, crackers, cookies, snack foods, and other foods made with or fried in partially hydrogenated oils. Unlike other fats, the majority of *trans* fat is formed when food manufacturers turn liquid oils into solid fats like shortening and hard margarine. A small amount of *trans* fat is found naturally, primarily in dairy products, some meat, and other animal-based foods.



What are the Dangers?

Trans fat, like saturated fat and dietary cholesterol, raises the LDL cholesterol that increases your risk for heart disease. It is also implicated in altering our DNA. Canadians consume on average 4 to 5 times as much saturated fat as *trans* fat in their diets.

What Can You Do About Saturated Fat, *Trans* Fat, and Cholesterol?

When comparing foods, look at the Nutrition Facts panel, and choose the food with the lower amounts of saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol. Health experts recommend that you keep your intake of saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol as low as possible while consuming a nutritionally adequate diet. However, these experts recognize that eliminating these three components entirely from your diet is not practical because they are unavoidable in ordinary diets.

Can You Find *Trans* Fat on the Food Label?

Yes, but remember, labels can be deceiving. It's legal to show zero *trans* fats on a label if there is less than 2 grams of *trans* fat *in a serving*.

For example, one Oreo cookie has 1.8 grams of *trans* fats, but because the manufacturers make a serving size as one cookie, it holds under 2 gms of *trans* fats, but legally they can put 0 *trans* fat on the label.

But who ever eats one Oreo cookie? So, if you eat 5 cookies, you're getting 9 grams of *trans* fats, and you don't even know it. Now that's fancy foot-work on behalf of Health Canada and Mr. Christie!

Remember, if the list of ingredients says **hydrogenated** or **modified** oils, it's a *trans* fat in disguise.

Total Fat, Saturated Fat, *Trans* Fat, and Cholesterol Content Per Serving*

Product	Common Serving Size	Total Fat g	Sat. Fat g	%DV for Sat. Fat	Trans Fat g	Combined Sat. & <i>Trans</i> Fat g	Chol. mg	%DV for Chol.
French Fried Potatoes± (Fast Food)	Medium (147 g)	27	7	35%	8	15	0	0%
Butter**	1 tbsp	11	7	35%	0	7	30	10%
Margarine, stick†	1 tbsp	11	2	10%	3	5	0	0%
Margarine, tub†	1 tbsp	7	1	5%	0.5	1.5	0	0%
Mayonnaise†† (Soybean Oil)	1 tbsp	11	1.5	8%	0	1.5	5	2%
Shortening±	1 tbsp	13	3.5	18%	4	7.5	0	0%
Potato Chips±	Small bag (42.5 g)	11	2	10%	3	5	0	0%
Milk, whole±	1 cup	7	4.5	23%	0	4.5	35	12%
Milk, skim†	1 cup	0	0	0%	0	0	5	2%
Doughnut±	1	18	4.5	23%	5	9.5	25	8%
Cookies± (Cream Filled)	3 (30 g)	6	1	5%	2	3	0	0%
Candy Bar±	1 (40 g)	10	4	20%	3	7	<5	1%
Cake, pound±	1 slice (80 g)	16	3.5	18%	4.5	8	0	0%

*Nutrient values rounded based on FDA's nutrition labeling regulations.

** Butter values from FDA Table of *Trans* Values, 1/30/95.

† Values derived from 2002 USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 15.

†† Prerelease values derived from 2003 USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 16.

± 1995 USDA Composition Data.