

Good News About *Trans* Fats

A recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health found that *trans* fat levels in the blood of adults dropped very significantly between 2000 and 2009. This is attributed to vigorous public health and advocacy campaigns waged since the 1990s, which included banning of *trans* fats in restaurants in New York and Philadelphia. Many food producing corporations slowly yielded to pressure, reformulating recipes and cooking processes to eliminate *trans* fats.

Trans fats are found in foods, mostly in processed foods. *Trans* fats, also called partially hydrogenated oil, are made by a chemical process where hydrogen is added to any oil. Food manufacturers like to use partially hydrogenated oils because they are cheap to make and food stays fresher longer. Partially hydrogenated oils also are used when frying food.

Trans fats are considered to be the worst type of fat. They raise the amount of LDL cholesterol, the *bad* (*lousy*) cholesterol, and lower the amount of *healthy* HDL cholesterol. This can contribute to coronary heart disease and high cholesterol. The new research findings show significant declines in blood *trans* fat

blood *trans* fat levels, LDL cholesterol and triglycerides, and increases in HDL cholesterol.

Although many restaurants and food producers no longer use *trans* fats, they are still in use, according to the Center for Science in the Public Interest. The Center wants to see a total ban on partially hydrogenated oils by the FDA.

To avoid *trans* fats, check nutrition labels for partially hydrogenated oils. The products these are used in include:

- Baked goods such as muffins, crackers, cookies, cake and brownie mixes and other snacks
- ice cream
- Fried foods such as donuts, fried fish and French fries.
- Most stick and many tub margarines.

Be aware that if a food has less than 0.5 grams of *trans* fats, it can be listed as 0 grams on the Nutrition Facts label. Check the ingredients list for partially hydrogenated oils to be sure.

Some of this information is from "Blood Levels of Trans Fats Are Declining in American" by Anahad O'Connor, well.blogs.nytimes.com, February 8, 2012.

Recipe of the Week: Pizza with Pesto and Tomatoes

adapted from eatingwell.com serves 4

1 pound prepared whole-wheat pizza dough
1/2 cup prepared pesto
4 ripe plum tomatoes, thinly sliced
thin slices red onion
1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese or part-skim ricotta
Freshly ground pepper, to taste
1/4 cup lightly packed fresh basil leaves, torn

1. Divide dough into 4 pieces. Roll each piece into an 8-inch round crust, about 1/4" thick.
2. To grill: Lay crusts on grill, cover grill and cook till crusts are lightly puffed and undersides are lightly browned, about 3

minutes. Use tongs to flip crusts. Immediately spread pesto over crusts. If using ricotta, put teaspoonfuls on top of the pesto. Top with tomatoes. If using feta, sprinkle over tomatoes. Place onions on top. Cover grill. Cook till undersides are lightly browned, about 3 minutes.

3. To bake in oven, spread pesto on crust and top with cheese, tomatoes and onions. Bake according to instructions on dough package.
4. Sprinkle with basil after cooking.

Nutrition information: calories: 430 total fat: 18g
saturated fat: 7g protein: 17g fiber: 4g sodium: 749 mg

Tip of the Week: One of Mike Kramer's *4 Steps to Healthier Surroundings* is to **create opportunities to trade knowledge**. We all have a lot to teach or share with each other and learn from each other. Set something up where people are learning from each other on a regular basis. Try a healthy potluck lunch or a online Workout Exchange, where people trade ideas for "Fitting in Fitness." Start by sharing what are you already good at, what you get compliments on, and what you like to talk about.
--- from www.sparkpeople.com