

F. N.- 16-01/GA/2017-FSSAI
Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
FDA Bhawan, Kotla Road, New Delhi – 110002

Dated, the 24th July, 2018

To,

1. **Secretary**, Ministry of Women & Child Development,
Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi
2. **Secretary**, Department of School & Elementary Education,
Ministry of Human Resource Development,
Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi.

Subject: Advisory on Food Safety & Nutrition under Section 16 (5) of Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006- regarding.

Sir/Madam,

As you may be aware the consumption of industrial trans-fat is related to increased risk of high cholesterol and heart diseases. In 2010, globally more than 500,000 deaths occurred due to high intake of trans-fats. Recognizing the quantum of damage due to intakes of trans-fat, WHO has given a call to eliminate industrially- produced trans-fats from the global food supply by 2023. In alignment with the WHO, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in a meeting with Vanaspati and edible oil manufacturers, public health experts and consumer organizations decided to bring down the trans-fatty acids (TFA) in Vanaspati/ bakery shortenings/ margarine to less than 2% in a phased manner, which would effectively bring the level of trans fats to zero level in food in India.

In order to further eliminate industrial trans-fats from the food chain, I would request you to advise the procurement agencies under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) and Mid-Day-Meal Scheme not to procure and use trans- fat containing fats/ oils (Vanaspati) in the preparation of foods and also desist from procuring food products prepared using margarine and bakery shortenings. A brief note on trans-fats and their health effects and strategies for trans-fat reduction and elimination is attached herewith.

It is therefore requested this advisory issued under Section 16(5) of the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 may please be given effect to.



(Pawan Agrawal)

Secretary to the Government of India & CEO

Encl: as above.

Copy to:

1. **Chief Secretaries**, all States/ UTs.
2. **Principal Secretaries/ Secretaries**, Department of Women & Child Development in States/ UTs.

Trans fatty acid: Brief note

What are Trans Fats?

Trans fatty acids (TFA) are unsaturated fatty acids that contain at least one non-conjugated double bond in the trans configuration, resulting in a straighter shape. TFA present in our diet can either be industrially produced and ruminant/natural. The major process contributing to formation of industrial TFA is hydrogenation of vegetable oils. Thermal processes such as edible oil refining and frying also lead to the formation of TFA while, ruminant/natural TFA is formed in small amounts in the stomach (rumen) of ruminant animals through bio-hydrogenation.

Why are Trans Fats bad?

Consumption of industrial TFA is strongly associated with increased risk of coronary heart disease and related mortality. TFA increases levels of LDL (unhealthy) cholesterol and decreases levels of HDL (healthy) cholesterol. It clogs arteries and increases the risk of coronary heart disease. There are also indications that TFA may increase inflammation and endothelial dysfunction, cause insulin resistance, complications during pregnancy, compromised fetal development, infertility and cognitive decline. Globally, increased TFA intake is estimated to be responsible for more than 500,000 deaths per year. Replacement of TFA with unsaturated fatty acids (from healthier oils) decreases the risk of CHD, in part, by ameliorating the negative effects of TFA on blood lipids.

Supporting Facts:

- Industrial trans-fat is a toxic compound that kills hundreds of thousands every year unnecessarily.
- Replacing these harmful chemicals with healthier oils is possible and will save 17 million lives from heart attacks in the 25 years after successful global elimination.
- Cardiovascular disease is the world's #1 killer, killing more than 18 million people every year. When we look around the world and see what we can do to prevent heart disease, trans fat elimination is at the top tier of things that are within reach and can have large-scale impact.

What is the current situation in India?

In line with the recommended dietary allowance (RDA) for Indians, WHO recommends that total TFA intake be limited to less than 1% of total energy intake, which translates to less than 2.2 g/day in a 2,000-calorie diet. This recommendation has been achieved in a growing number of countries and should be achievable globally. Elimination of industrially-produced TFA from the food supply is critical to achieving this aim.

In India, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) require the product to declare the amount of trans fatty acid in grams (g), where a claim is made regarding the amount or type of fatty acids or the amount of cholesterol. In 2017, India implemented a mandatory limit of 5% trans fat content in fats/oils.

What is the way forward?

Industrially produced TFA have no known health benefits. Elimination of industrially produced TFA is feasible and achievable. During the past decade, various policy actions (including mandatory and voluntary TFA labelling, reformulation, and national and local TFA prohibitions) have been implemented by countries aiming to restrict the TFA content of food and reduce TFA intake in their populations. Several countries have in fact, virtually eliminated industrially-produced TFA from the food supply through implementation of systematic policy actions and monitoring programs.

Elimination/reduction of TFA requires action and cooperation by governments, NGOs, consumers and industry, and can be done through regulatory actions, promotion of healthier fats and oils, and strong monitoring systems. The WHO recommends countries to establish mandatory limits for trans fats to less than 2 g/100g of total fat or oil in all foods (as was pioneered in Denmark in 2003 and subsequently adopted in several countries) OR to reclassify partially hydrogenated vegetable oils as unsafe (as is being done in Brazil, Canada and the US).

WHO has led global efforts to eradicate infectious diseases – such as smallpox, polio, and guinea worm – and eliminate others such as river blindness. Now, for the first time, WHO has called for

a complete elimination of a risk factor for a non-communicable disease with the elimination of industrial trans fat from the global food supply.

'REPLACE' action plan released by WHO is based on evidence and lessons from countries that have successfully achieved elimination and provides countries a clear pathway forward to achieve prompt, complete and sustained elimination.

WHO's REPLACE package aims to accelerate restrictions and bans on trans fats by providing governments with these six steps to eliminate this harmful compound.

- **RE**view dietary sources of trans fats and assess the landscape for required policy change.
- **P**romote use and consumption of healthier fats and oils to replace industrially-produced trans fats.
- **L**egislate or enact regulatory actions to eliminate trans fats.
- **A**ssess and monitor changes in industrially-produced trans fat consumption in the population, as well as amounts of trans fats and their replacement fatty acids in the food supply.
- **C**reate awareness of the negative health impact of trans fats among policy-makers, producers, suppliers, and the public.
- **E**nforce the implementation and compliance of policies and regulations.

Ways to reduce trans fat during food preparation:

- Avoid using "*Vanaspati*" for any kind of cooking in your kitchen.
- When deep frying the foods (*Poori/ bhatura/pakora* etc.) do not heat the fat/oil for long time.
- Do not re-use the fat/oil used for frying.
- Do not repeatedly reheat the same oil.
- Avoid using food items prepared in "*Vanaspati*" or margarine.
- Avoid using ready to use (instant) mixes for preparing foods as they have a higher chance of having Trans fats.