



## 9 Important Facts about Trans Fats or Trans Fatty Acids (TFAs)

The Government will soon finalise a proposed regulation limit of Trans Fatty Acids (TFAs) or trans fats in food products because their higher consumption may put people at a fatal risk of COVID-19. Let us have a look at some important facts related to Trans Fats or Trans Fatty Acids (TFAs).

**SHIKHA GOYAL**

SEP 2, 2020 18:53 IST



### *Trans Fats*

Trans fats or trans-fatty acids are a form of unsaturated fats. They come in both natural and artificial forms.

According to the chief executive officer at the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) Arun Singhal, "Higher content of Trans fats in food is a potential cause of heart ailments and stroke. In fact, comorbid medical conditions like the heart are a major risk factor for **COVID-19**. It has been seen that most of the patients who died due to COVID-19 in India had comorbid conditions. We have decided to expedite a proposed trans-fat limiting regulation as this is often needed of the hour during the pandemic."

Due to COVID-19, over 55000 persons in India have succumbed to and of which the majority of the people suffered from one or the other comorbid conditions like **heart** ailments, stroke, diabetes, hypertension, kidney diseases, etc.

### **About a proposed draft**

In September 2019, India's apex food regulator proposed a draft to limit trans fats in food products not more than 2% through an amendment in the Food Safety and Standards ((Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), trans-fatty acids that are produced industrially are contained in hardened vegetable fats like margarine and ghee, also in snack food, baked foods, and fried foods. These foods are used by manufacturers in large quantities due to the longer shelf life than other fats.

Do you know that currently, India accounts for the largest number of deaths that are caused due to trans-fatty acids in the world annually? It is estimated that between 60,000 to 75,000 people die because of these trans fats.

In 2018, India made a public commitment to get rid of TFA from its food systems by 2022. Therefore, in 2019, the country has created a draft regulation but no concrete legislative action has been taken. Let us have a look at some facts about Trans-fatty acids (TFAs) or trans fats.

### **9 Facts about Trans- Fatty Acids or Trans Fats**

1. Trans fat is double trouble for the health of the heart. It increases bad cholesterol and lowers good cholesterol in the body.

2. Trans fats are a type of dietary fat. Of all the fats it is the worst for health. In the diet, too much trans fat increases the risk of heart diseases and other health problems.

#### **List of Heart Diseases, causes, and symptoms**

3. Artificial trans fats are created when hydrogen is added to unsaturated liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid. Food manufacturers use partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs) to improve the texture, shelf life, and flavour of food. Of this type of trans fat, PHOs are the main source in the United States, according to the FDA.

4. Artificial trans fats are found in fried foods, commercial baked goods, processed foods, etc. and naturally formed trans fats are found in small quantities in meat, milk, and milk products.

5. Cutting trans fats may extend life. According to the previous study published in the January 2016 issue of the Journal of Health Economics, in New York trans fat ban is also tied to an estimated 4.5% decrease in mortality rates from cardiovascular disease or 13 fewer such deaths per 100,000 people per year.

6. In 1902, PHOs were discovered by scientist Wilhelm Normann. For several years, it was thought that eating shortening or margarine made from PHOs was preferable to butter as they didn't contain saturated fat. Around the 1980s researchers started uncovering the health hazards that come from consuming PHOs.

7. Trans fats nutritional information: According to the FDA, eat less trans fats as possible. Consuming trans fats can lead to severe health diseases. If in a food "0 grams of trans fats" is listed on the label but still contains less than 0.5 grams of trans fat per serving. If a food contains partially hydrogenated oils then it contains trans fats. Check the nutritional value of food.

8. According to the eight-year trial of almost 49,000 women that is Women's Health Initiative (WHI) Dietary Modification Trial, found that a low-fat diet had no effect on breast cancer, heart disease, colorectal cancer, or weight.

9. Alternative names of trans fats are partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs); Cholesterol - trans fats; Hyperlipidemia - trans fats; Atherosclerosis - trans fat; Hardening of the arteries - trans fat; Hypercholesterolemia - trans fat; Coronary artery disease - trans fat; Heart disease - trans fat; Peripheral artery disease - trans fat; PAD - trans fat; Stroke - trans fat; CAD - trans fat; Heart-healthy diet - trans fat.