

Cut down on trans fats: Expert

Feb 18, 2019

Food authority launches drive to create awareness on issue

How trans fat harms us

- It builds bad cholesterol on the walls of the arteries, making them narrow or hard.
- It decreases the level of good cholesterol.
- Increases the risk of developing heart diseases and stroke.
- Associated with higher risk of developing type-2 diabetes.

What are trans fats

- Trans fat is a type of unsaturated fatty acids that occur in small amount in nature but are produced widely in industrial units from vegetable fats for use in packaged baked goods, frying fast food and used in snacks.

What to avoid

- Avoid foods which contain high content of trans fat
- Baked items, snacks, fried foods, creamer, margarine, fast food

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Tribune News Service

Ludhiana, February 17

Since the number of people falling prey to heart attacks and stroke are increasing, the government has woken up to the health issue.

Not only urban but even the rural folks are now increasingly suffering heart attacks and brain strokes.

Keeping in mind the rise in these diseases, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has launched a campaign for creating awareness about consequence of trans fats.

The FSSAI has even set a target of eliminating trans fat in India by 2022, a year ahead of the global target set by the WHO for complete elimination of trans fats.

So, the next time you pick a packet of chips or muffins from a bakery counter just recall that even the government is now asking you to stop buying these and eliminate these from your diet.

Dr Avinash Jindal, medicine specialist at the Civil Hospital, said at present, it is not only the urban population but even the rural residents are falling prey to lifestyle diseases.

“They have high cholesterol, high BP, high levels of sugars and are more number of people falling prey to heart attack, obesity, diabetes and stroke. The gap between the lifestyle of urban and rural people is decreasing. These days I receive patients who are suffering from these ailments and are from rural background. As much as 50 per cent patients we receive are from rural areas,” said Dr Jindal.

Akashdeep, a cardiologist from the city, said people needed to change their food habits if they wanted to remain healthy.

“Return to the basics should be the mantra. Eat less processed food and you will remain healthy. Regular and excessive consumption of foods high in salt and sugar should be avoided and moderation should be the key. An average Indian consumes 10 gram of salt per day, which is double the amount of salt recommended,” he added

Currently, the permitted levels of trans fats in vegetables oils and hydrogenated vegetable oils is five per cent and the FSSAI wants to bring it down to two per cent by 2022.