**Trans Fats**

**What are *Trans* fats?**

There are two broad types of trans fats found in foods: naturally-occurring and artificial *trans* fats. Naturally-occurring trans fats are produced in the gut of some animals and foods made from these animals (e.g., milk and meat products) may contain small quantities of these fats. Artificial *trans* fats (or *trans* fatty acids) are created in an industrial process that adds hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid.

**Why do some companies use *trans* fats?**

*Trans* fats are easy to use, inexpensive to produce and last a long time. *Trans* fats give foods a desirable taste and texture. Many restaurants and fast-food outlets use *trans* fats to deep-fry foods because oils with *trans* fats can be used many times in commercial fryers.

**How do *trans* fats affect my health?**

*Trans* fats raise your bad (LDL) cholesterol levels and lower your [good (HDL) cholesterol levels](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/Cholesterol/AboutCholesterol/Good-vs-Bad-Cholesterol_UCM_305561_Article.jsp). Eating *trans* fats increases your [risk of developing heart disease and stroke](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/What-Are-My-Risks-For-Getting-Heart-Disease-Infographic_UCM_443749_SubHomePage.jsp). It’s also associated with a higher [risk of developing type 2 diabetes](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/More/Diabetes/UnderstandYourRiskforDiabetes/Understand-Your-Risk-for-Diabetes_UCM_002034_Article.jsp).

**Why did *trans* fats become so popular if they have such bad health effects?**

Before 1990, very little was known about how *trans* fat can harm your health. In the 1990s, research began [identifying[http://cdncache-a.akamaihd.net/items/it/img/arrow-10x10.png](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/Trans-Fats_UCM_301120_Article.jsp#46070693)](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/Trans-Fats_UCM_301120_Article.jsp#46070693) the adverse health effects of *trans* fats. Based on these findings, FDA instituted labeling regulations for *trans* fat and consumption has decreased in the US in recent decades, however some individuals may consume high levels of *trans* fats based on their food choices.

**Which foods contain *trans* fats?**

*Trans* fats can be found in many foods – including fried foods like doughnuts, and baked goods including cakes, pie crusts, biscuits, frozen pizza, cookies, crackers, and stick margarines and other spreads. You can determine the amount of *trans* fats in a particular packaged food by looking at the [Nutrition Facts panel](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/Understanding-Food-Nutrition-Labels_UCM_300132_Article.jsp). However, products can be listed as “0 grams of *trans* fats” if they contain 0 grams to less than 0.5 grams of *trans* fat per serving. You can also spot *trans* fats by [reading ingredient lists](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/Understanding-Ingredients-on-Food-Labels_UCM_433234_Article.jsp) and looking for the ingredients referred to as “partially hydrogenated oils.”

**How can I limit my daily of *trans* fats?**

Read the Nutrition Facts panel on foods you buy at the store and, when eating out, ask what kind of oil foods are cooked in. Replace the *trans* fats in your diet with [monounsaturated](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/Monounsaturated-Fats_UCM_301460_Article.jsp) or [polyunsaturated](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyEating/Nutrition/Polyunsaturated-Fats_UCM_301461_Article.jsp) fats.

**Here are some ways to achieve that (limiting your intake of trans fat):**

* Eat a dietary pattern that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, poultry, fish and nuts. Also limit red meat and sugary foods and beverages.
* Use naturally occurring, non-hydrogenated vegetable oils such as canola, safflower, sunflower or olive oil most often.
* Look for processed foods made with non-hydrogenated oil rather than partially hydrogenated or hydrogenated vegetable oils or saturated fat.
* Use soft margarine as a substitute for butter, and choose soft margarines (liquid or tub varieties) over harder stick forms. Look for “0 g trans fat” on the Nutrition Facts label and no hydrogenated oils in the ingredients list.
* Doughnuts, cookies, crackers, muffins, pies and cakes are examples of foods that may contain trans fat. Limit how frequently you eat them.
* Limit commercially fried foods and baked goods made with shortening or partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. Not only are these foods very high in fat, but that fat is also likely to be trans fat.

**Answer the following questions as completely as you can:**

1. What are some food that you eat that you think have trans fat?
2. Compare: How are trans fats similar to other fats (i.e. unsaturated and saturated)
3. Contrast: How are trans fats different from the other fats (i.e. unsaturated and saturated)
4. Are trans fats in the lunches you can buy at PVJH?
   1. Explain-