We know that fats and oils are a part of a healthful diet, but the type of fat makes a difference to heart health. Although a small amount of \textit{trans} fat is found naturally in foods like meat, butter, and milk, most \textit{trans} fat is formed when hydrogen is added to an oil to make a more solid fat like shortening or margarine. This process, called “hydrogenation,” increases shelf life and helps maintain the flavor and texture of foods.

You can reduce the amount of \textit{trans} fat your students consume by eliminating products with \textit{trans} fat or serving them less often. Check the Nutrition Facts labels and note the amount of “\textit{trans} fat” listed just below “saturated fat.” Food manufacturers can show “0 grams of \textit{trans} fat” if a serving contains less than 0.5 gram.

**Recipe for Success**

- **Review your menus.** Serve foods with \textit{trans} fat less often.
- **Check Nutrition Facts labels and ingredient lists on similar foods.** Choose the food with the lowest amount of \textit{trans} fat. Review nutrition labels frequently, as manufacturers change products regularly. Foods that list “shortening” or “partially hydrogenated vegetable oil” as an ingredient may contain \textit{trans} fat.
- **Talk with your current food vendors about new products with little or no \textit{trans} fat.** Look for vendors that have eliminated or reduced \textit{trans} fat in their products.
**USDA Commodity Foods**

USDA eliminated *trans* fat from its frozen potato products and stopped offering solid shortening. For more information about USDA commodity products and updates on efforts to reduce *trans* fat in other popular products, visit: [www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/SY09-schfoods.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/foods/SY09-schfoods.pdf)

- **Write specifications for food products** with no *trans* fat.
- **Serve nonbreaded meat products**, which usually contain less *trans* fat than breaded products.
- **Offer fruits and vegetables** to satisfy kids’ tastes for sweet and crunchy foods.
- **Discontinue the sale of á la carte snacks** containing *trans* fat such as certain types of cakes, cookies, and crackers.
- **Take the HealthierUS School Challenge!** Go for the Gold and offer meals that include more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, which are naturally low in *trans* fat!

**Messages for Students**

- **Be “label able.”** Learn to read the Nutrition Facts label so you can make healthier food choices.
- **For a fast and fun snack,** grab nuts and fruits instead of cookies and chips.

**Did You Know?**

Processed foods and oils provide about 80 percent of *trans* fat in the diet, compared to about 20 percent that occur naturally in food from animal sources.

These categories of processed foods contribute to the 80 percent:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Food Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>cakes, cookies, crackers, pies, bread, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17%</td>
<td>margarine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8%</td>
<td>fried potatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>potato chips, corn chips, popcorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>household shortening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5%</td>
<td>other foods including breakfast cereal and candy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**For more information:**

- [www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/transfat.html#whatis](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/transfat.html#whatis)