

Contact:
Cyndi O'Meara
Jeannette Oliver
Changing Habits, Changing Lives

PO Box 104
Mooloolaba, QLD 4557
Phone (07) 5477 7181
Fax (07) 5444 0538

Changing Habits



PRESS RELEASE

US Laws and Bans on Trans Fats, Will Australia Do the Same?

Recently in Reuters, an article about the New York City Board of Health proposing a ban on artificial trans fats from all restaurants with the city, highlighted the facts and latest critical findings on how artificially manufactured foods can impact our health.

Walter Willet, a leading U.S. nutritionist at the Harvard School of Public Health supports New York City's proposal stating, "Clearly, trans fats are causing large numbers of premature deaths and disability." Willet has called on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to enact a similar measure nation wide. Some of America's fast food chains are now voluntarily moving towards this trans fat reduction motivated by consumer demand. Wendy's Dunkin Donuts and McDonald's Corp have reduced the trans fats by switching to different cooking oils.

Recent research cited in the New England Journal of Medicine from Harvard School of Public Health, links trans fatty acids to cardiovascular disease. Additional action in response to these latest scientific findings is being taken by the U.S. The U.S. FDA is now requiring that all trans fats must be listed on food labels as of 1 January 2007.

Australia's own well-known nutritionist, Cyndi O'Meara, has presented similar information and advice about trans fats for nearly 20 years. She welcomes these findings and supports these actions. She is encouraging Australia to take note, step up and make significant changes in our consumption of trans fats before we head down the same poor health path as the U.S.

The debate between butter and margarine has raged for decades, but we now know that the partially hydrogenated fat (a trans fat) found in margarine and many processed foods are harmful to health. The saturated fat found in butter, is not a trans fat and is not harmful to human health. Hydrogenation is the process used to convert liquid vegetable oil into a solid fat – with the consistency of butter, the baking qualities of lard and a long shelf life; this in turn forms trans fatty acids. Hydrogenated vegetable oil and partially hydrogenated vegetable oil is found in many foods we eat today. Margarine, bread, pastry, cakes, chips, fast foods, to name a few, contains trans fats.

The increased consumption of trans fats has now been linked to the fattening of Australia as well as the increase in our own statistics in heart disease and diabetes. They increase the total cholesterol, raise the LDL (“bad”) cholesterol, and lower the (“good”) cholesterol. Beyond that they have undesirable consequences on cell membranes, the immune system, and may promote cancer and premature aging.

For further information please contact Cyndi O’Meara, nutritionist and author of Changing Habits, Changing Lives.