

Face The Fats

Cutting Bad Fats: Understanding The Big Fat Picture

(NAPSA)—Americans have taken steps to minimize trans fat in their diets, but do they understand what they are cutting out and what to replace it with?

On average, adults in the U.S. still consume approximately 2 percent of total calories from trans fat and four to five times as much saturated fat a day—far more than the limits recommended by the American Heart Association (AHA).

According to Robert H. Eckel, M.D., past president of the AHA, the problem may be that people still struggle to understand the “big fat picture.”

“Trans fat, commonly found in commercially baked goods and fried foods, has received a lot of well-deserved scrutiny. At the same time, while it’s critical that we continue to push aggressively to minimize its consumption, trans fat is just one part of the ‘big fat picture,’” said Eckel. “It’s equally important that we avoid increasing saturated fat in its place. Both trans and saturated fats, commonly found in meat and dairy products and some plant foods, raise LDL, the bad cholesterol, and increase the risk of developing heart disease.”

To help people understand their fat consumption, AHA launched its “Face The Fats” campaign, with a comprehensive Web site (www.AmericanHeart.org/FaceTheFats), to teach consumers how to minimize trans fat in their diet, while avoiding the unintended health consequence of defaulting to more saturated fat.

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FACE
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A new campaign teaches consumers the facts about fats.

The campaign’s *My Fats Translator* tool, featured on the Web site, is an interactive calorie and fat calculator that gives a quick personalized assessment on daily consumption limits for total, saturated and trans fats. Users input their age, gender, height, weight and level of physical activity and receive suggestions for smarter eating options.

As an example, for Jane Smith, a 50-year-old, 5-foot, 4-inch woman who weighs 140 pounds and has a low level of physical activity, *My Fats Translator* would calculate Jane’s Body Mass Index to be a “normal” 24. In order to maintain her weight, Jane should consume 1,980 calories per day.

My Fats Translator also provides the fat content of specific types of common foods—like fatty meats and sweet treats—and suggests healthier substitutions and wiser choices. Rather than eating a 500-calorie cheeseburger, it suggests trying a grilled chicken sandwich instead, saving over 100 calories and cutting down over 80 percent of the bad saturated and trans fats.

For more information, please visit www.AmericanHeart.org/FaceTheFats or call 1-800-AHA-USA1.