

Nutra Living^o

Health, wellness and living your best life - *naturally.*

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The FDA tackles trans fats

Trans fats have been under fire for nearly a decade. First in 2006, when the FDA called for trans fat content to be added to nutrition labels. Now seven years later, the FDA has finally tackled trans fats for good: the agency recently declared the ingredient no longer has “generally recognized as safe” (GRAS) status.

What does this mean for you, your food and your health? Read on to learn about one of the hottest topics of the year.

What are a trans fats?



Trans fats, or partially hydrogenated oils, are an artery’s nightmare. Found in certain processed foods, trans fats are made when a liquid vegetable oil is changed into a solid fat. Most often, trans fats are present in highly processed foods to improve taste, texture and to increase the shelf life of food products. Considered by health professionals as the worst type of dietary fat, trans fats raise LDL (bad) cholesterol and, unlike saturated fats, lower HDL (good) cholesterol. Consequently, this unhealthy ingredient is associated with an increased risk of heart disease.

Since 2006, when the FDA introduced labelling requirements for partially hydrogenated oils, consumer awareness of the detriments of trans fat has grown tremendously. As a result, food manufacturers have sought to clean up their formulations by limiting the use of trans fats. In 2003, according to the FDA, American intake of trans fats was 4.6 grams per day. Since then, that number has fallen quite dramatically to about 1 gram per day in 2012. However, the ingredient is still quite prevalent in grocery store aisles.

What now?

The recent announcement by the FDA that trans fats are no longer GRAS means that there can be no mass use of trans fats unless companies prove they are safe. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that eliminating them from the food supply could prevent up to 7,000 deaths from heart disease each year and up to 20,000 heart attacks. Not too shabby. It should be noted, however, that current FDA labelling policy allows food products with less than 0.5 grams of trans fat to be labelled “trans fat free.”

In its November 7th announcement, the FDA did not specify a timeline for when all trans fats should be phased out of processed foods, but is collecting comments for 60 days before determining a timeline for the phase out.

In Canada, trans fats are still found in many processed foods and many, including The Heart and Stroke Foundation, have criticized Health Canada for not taking a tougher stand on the issue. In June 2007, the government of Canada announced that it was giving the food industry two years to reduce the amount of trans fat in its products, and promised government monitoring of trans fat levels every six months in the interim.

In late 2009, Health Canada released its final monitoring results and published a report showing that high levels of trans fats still exist in many foods sold in Canada. Since then there has been no further action from Health Canada on the issue.



Natural health products 101

Ask the experts: *Natural health products*



Our team of regulatory specialists and nutritional scientists at Nutrasource Diagnostics, answers all your burning questions about the not-so-straightforward world of natural health products.

Q: It's that time of year, cold-season!

How can I fight winter colds naturally?

Have a question?
Just ask!
newsletter@nutrasource.ca

A: Happy cold and flu season!

We're definitely in favour of the old adage, "The best offense is a good defense," especially when it comes to staying healthy during the winter. This winter build your immune defenses by eating and sleeping well, staying hydrated and exercising regularly. But when all else fails here are three natural supplements known to boost immunity and help fight the winter cold.

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

Omega-3 fatty acids are known for a number of health benefits, but did you know they can help build immunity as well? A study conducted by Britain's Institute of Human Nutrition and School of Medicine found that omega-3s increase the activity of bacteria-eating cells known as phagocytes. Health Canada suggests eating fatty fish, such as salmon, twice weekly to reap the mega rewards of omega-3 fatty acids. Not a fan of fish? Pop an IFOS certified omega-3 supplement instead.

VITAMIN D

This powerful nutrient has been shown to boost immunity and therefore may help prevent colds. Remember that the sunshine vitamin is hard to get through sunlight in the winter months, so you may wish to opt for a supplement instead. Health Canada suggests a minimum of 600 IU per day, not exceeding 4000 IU.

GINSENG

Certain types of ginseng, specifically American ginseng extract (*Panax quinquefolius*), have been shown to reduce the number and severity of colds by increasing the amount of white blood cells and supporting the immune system. When you feel a cold coming on, try a ginseng powered supplement.

PRACTICE CLEAN HANDS

Amazingly, about 80% of infectious diseases are transmitted by touch. Keep healthy this cold season by frequently washing your hands. Not near a sink? Invest in hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.



Natural product trends to watch in 2014

2013 marked a year of unprecedented growth and product innovation in the natural product space, but we predict 2014 will mark a new high for the industry. From GMOs to paleo, our trend spotters anticipate some of the biggest trends to watch in this year.

PALEO

Without a doubt the caveman diet (a modern attempt to replicate the diet of humans of the Paleolithic age) was a huge craze in 2013. This year we are on the lookout for even more paleo friendly products for the modern hunter-gatherer. We're betting we'll see more artisanal niche products such as fruit and nut breads, bacon cookies and nut-based cheeses, all gluten and dairy-free of course!

GMO

Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) definitely made headlines in 2013. With Whole Foods' mandate for GMO labelling on all products by 2018, and a number of proposed GMO labelling legislations in the works, we think 2013 was just the tip of the iceberg. Market experts project the non-gmo market could reach \$800 billion by 2017.

{EXOTIC} FUNCTIONAL FOODS

This year be on the look out for functional ingredients sourced from exotic locations that offer antioxidant or energy boosting benefits.

GLUTEN FREE 2.0

Gluten free is one of the hottest trends to ever hit the food and beverage industry. Sadly gluten free has become synonymous with taste-free. Not anymore. In 2014 look for gluten free foods supercharged with flavour and added functional ingredients like omega-3s, probiotics and protein.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

More energy is something we are all looking for, a fact that food, beverage and supplement manufacturers are well aware of! Forget caffeine and taurine. In 2014, watch for energy infused natural products containing B vitamins, ginseng and goji berry.

Sources: Packaged Facts, Non-GMO Foods: Global Market Perspective, 2013.



How to: Keep your 2014 resolutions

January is here. The spending is over, the food coma has subsided and winter has truly begun. We've set resolutions, goals and promises and this is the year we will see them through. This year will be different. We will stick to our goals, we will be better versions of ourselves and see our resolutions right through to December 2015. Right? But how?

Pinpoint your most important resolutions

Planning too many resolutions is a rookie mistake. The fewer things that our mind has to focus on, the better, especially when it comes to making lifestyle changes. Pinpoint the few resolutions that matter most to you and you're already on a path to success.

Get specific

Vague goals are easily forgotten. This year forget general goals. Swap "get fit in 2014" for "exercise for at least 30 minutes daily". The more specific you are, the easier it will be to reach your end goal.

Schedule and celebrate

For many, big goals can be hard to achieve immediately, which can lead to frustration and failure. In 2014, give yourself a time line, measure your progress and celebrate your achievements along the way. Celebrating the journey will make the end goal seem that much more reachable. The pat on the back will also help to keep you on track!

Beta-test your resolution

Not every resolution is perfect from the get-go, so don't berate yourself if a poorly formed goal is just not working out. Give yourself a 30-day trial run to work out the kinks and re-work your goals if needed. Have a resolution not worth keeping? Don't get down on yourself! Focus on more important goals instead.

Get visual

Visualizing the end result with a goal board is a great way to keep motivated. Fill a cork-board with inspiration to help keep your resolutions top-of-mind.

Write it down

Write down your goals and your time line to help keep you on track. Making a plan on paper makes your lofty goal a firm commitment.

Work the buddy system

Having someone keep you accountable is an old yet tried-and-true tip for sticking to your resolutions. Share your resolutions to a close group of family and friends who will be honest with you and keep you on the right track.





Living well: *Your guide to cooking oils*

There are many different types of cooking oils to choose from and each one has different characteristics and taste profiles. Read on to learn more about three of the healthier options- camelina, coconut and extra-virgin olive oil.

Camelina oil

Derived from the plant *camelina sativa*, camelina oil traces back 3000 years to northern Europe and parts of Central Asia. More recently it has been approved for Canada's domestic market in the past few years.

This pea-shaped seed is packed with plant-based omega-3 fatty acid alpha-linolenic acid (ALA). It is also a great source of vitamin E, which acts as antioxidant, to make the oil more stable and resistant to heat. Its high smoke point (475°F) makes it excellent for high-heat cooking.

You can expect a nutty-earthy flavour from camelina oil - perfect for winter inspired dishes such as butternut squash soup.



Coconut oil

Coconut oil was a hit ingredient in 2013 and with good reason! Although high in saturated fat, coconut oil is made up of medium-chain fatty acids, meaning it metabolizes more easily when compared to other long-chain fatty acids found in meat and dairy. Its high fat content makes it a very stable oil, perfect for high-temperature cooking and baking.

Made by shredding and cold-pressing coconut meat, coconut oil has been shown to help boost metabolism, lower LDL cholesterol (bad) and support the immune system.

Add virgin coconut oil to your next stir-fry for a heart-healthy tropical kick.



Extra-virgin olive oil

Extra-virgin olive oil, or EVOO, has long been a foodie and nutritionist favourite. Foodies adore its fragrant taste and versatility, while nutritionists love its numerous health benefits, including its ability to help lower LDL cholesterol and control insulin levels.

EVOO's flavour bursts through when used uncooked, such as in salad dressings and vinaigrettes, but it also tastes great drizzled over your favourite breads and artisan cheeses.



We want to hear from you!

If you have a question or comment, or would like to suggest a topic for a future issue of NutraLiving we're all ears!
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