

Technofats by Kay Hansen

Did you hear all the commotion about New York City actually banning trans fats from all restaurants? It seems like a bit of high-handed legislation and yet the motivation was to force the fast-food and restaurant industry to provide healthier foods that don't contribute to heart disease. The hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated oil currently in use increases LDL cholesterol (the bad cholesterol) and lowers HDL cholesterol (the good cholesterol). In addition, trans fats may contribute to cancer.

The fall out means that states across the country are also considering similar legislation including, California, Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts, Maryland, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, Texas and Virginia. Sounds like a good thing for the heart health of America. Especially since the American Heart Association recommends that Americans reduce the amount of trans fats in their diets.

So the trend is 'down with trans fats', which now must be labeled on packaged foods. Compliant restaurants are looking for oil that is stable for frying and still provides the same baking result as saturated fats. Many fast food companies are turning to "interesterified fats". "What in the world is that?", you might ask. This is a chemical or enzyme process that takes vegetable oils and rearranges the fatty acid structure to produce a fat similar to partially hydrogenated oil in texture, more like shortening; very stable for frying, and no trans fats! Sounds great, the fried food even absorbs less oil, lasts longer and may cost the restaurants less. What could be better?

Alas, recent research, reported in *Nutrition & Metabolism*, shows that these new interesterified fats may be as bad as or worse than trans fats from hydrogenated oils. This study showed after a four week dietary trial on human subjects that the interesterified fat raised the bad cholesterol and lowered the good cholesterol even more than hydrogenated soybean oil! The unaltered palm oil (a naturally saturated plant oil) used in the study for comparison showed no adverse changes on blood lipids.

There's more. This same study showed that interesterified fat also raises blood sugar levels almost 20%. Not only does a high fat diet affect insulin sensitivity, but the use of these modified fats decreases insulin levels further, increasing blood sugars and contributing to diabetes.

McDonald's has announced that it will introduce a new fat in all of its restaurants to replace the partially hydrogenated oils which contains trans fats. They have stated only that it is a canola oil base, and includes corn and soy oils. But, it is very likely to include an interesterified fat. Other restaurants may go to new commercial cooking oil produced by Source Food Technologies that is vegetable oil blended with tallow (rendered beef fat)! So, be aware of labels that say 'interesterified soybean oil', 'high stearate' or 'stearic rich', terms all related to these modified oils.

The long and short of it, as I see it, is this; chemically altered, processed, manufactured foods are not the answer for good health. Man continually seeks to improve its technofoods in order to improve the 'bottom line.' But, it has nothing to do with health. Even highly processed plant foods are not the same as what nature provides. It takes a lot of audacity for

man to think he can improve on what God has provided. After all, when He created the plants He “saw that it was good.”

The recommendation from the Live-for-Health Wellness Program is to choose from a menu of whole plant foods. Prepare them simply and naturally in your own kitchen. Use only small amounts of olive oil for cooking and salad dressings. Then, enjoy the blessing of better health, and give the praise to God.