

“Trans Fat: A Silent Killer”

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Hi my name is Cory and I am a fourth grader here in Greenwich, and I like health and nutrition. I like to eat healthy and be healthy. And, I want everyone to be healthy. One thing I try my best to avoid trans fat and check the labels on everything I eat. BUT in restaurants there are no labels to check and no warnings. That's why I went around to different restaurants in Greenwich that kids like, to ask them if they served any trans fat on their menu. I will tell about that in a minute but first, what is trans fat and why is it so bad for you?

Trans fat is an artificial fat that is man-made. Trans fat has been around for almost 100 years. It shows up in oil, margarine, or shortening. Sometimes they call it “partially hydrogenated oil” and sometimes “mono-glycerides” and “di-glycerides” have trans fat too. For many years companies used trans fat because people thought it tasted better and it was less expensive. For example, frying oil lasts longer, pastries like pies and cookies look better and feel better, like being more crunchy or creamy, and they can stay on the store shelf longer.

But what they didn't realize was that it was an invisible and silent killer.

Trans fat is bad for you because it increases bad cholesterol, reduces good cholesterol, it can't digest very well in your body, so it gets stuck in your blood vessels and clogs them up. And that can lead up to a heart attack or stroke. Or other diseases like heart disease. For example, the American Heart Association says there are more than 17 million people who have heart disease in the United States today who are still alive. For now. “Heart disease is now the leading cause of death and disability for women,” says Greenwich Hospital. “In fact, it kills more women than all cancers combined.” How many of those people are sick from trans fat? Would you rather have something

more crunchy and creamy that leads up to a stroke, or something not as crunchy or creamy with no trans fat?

Natural fats are better than trans fat. Some examples of natural fats are polyunsaturated fat and monounsaturated fat. I found out from BrainPop.com that these can be found in vegetable oils, like those in nuts, fish, and avocados.

Natural fats are good because they are a source of energy to burn off. My aunt, Claire, told me that they also help create a good kind of inflammation that your body needs to heal when you get a cut on your skin or a bruise or an injury. Remember, your body does need to have at least some fats.

Now, back to the results. With help from my Dad, I visited Chicken Joe's, Planet Pizza, Subway, Wendy's, McDonald's, Gofer's, and Starbucks, and we called Penang Grill. I also checked some of their websites. I also looked at the Domino's website. I had a clipboard and the answers were "Yes," "No," or "Don't Know." The question was, "Do you serve trans fat?" Chicken Joe's serves trans fat in their fried things, says Victor, who works there. McDonald's serves trans fat in almost everything, according to Fernando, the manager. Starbucks, luckily, does not



serve trans fat on their menu, a person named Jennifer who works there, told me. An employee at Gofer's named Jiay told me they serve trans fat in some of their ice creams. The owner of Penang Grill, Danny, said "no." They only use natural vegetable oils. The manager at Planet Pizza, Mike, said "no." The manager at Wendy's in Norwalk, a man named Greimy, said "no" but to me he looked puzzled. I think he really didn't know what trans fat was. So that's why I'm doing this report.

When I looked at the websites, the answer for Wendy's was totally different. The Wendy's Triple Baconator, for example, has 3.5 grams of trans fat. So does their Bacon Deluxe Triple and Triple with Everything and Cheese. Those are just the ones with the most, but all their burgers have trans fat. In the McDonald's Double Quarter Pounder++ it has 2.5 grams of trans fat. The Big Mac has 1.5 grams. The Angus Deluxe has 2. Same as Wendy's, all their burgers have trans fat. Domino's in their Extra Large Feast Pizza it had 4 grams of trans fat. The highest one I've ever seen was the Domino's American Legends Extra Large with 8 grams.

Some surprises are the hot chocolate at McDonald's even has trans fat, and so do all the Triple Shakes, with 2 grams each. Another surprise was the

breadsticks at Domino's and the Domino's Bread Bowl Pasta which both had 1 gram. I'm sad to tell you but in Subway's Meatball Sub, which my brother loves, it has 1 gram of trans fat. Now he is never going to eat it again. In their 6" sandwiches like the Philly Cheesesteak, the Chicken and Bacon Ranch, Cold Cut Combo, and Tuna Melt they all have trans fat.

Did you know that all those restaurants sell trans fat? I think trans fat is too dangerous and should not be served at any place in Greenwich, or Fairfield County, or any other place. Or if they do serve trans fat then they should give a warning. By the way, in New York City they banned trans fat in all restaurants. Because they knew it was too dangerous for the people in the city.



A Triple Baconator.

SOURCES:

- www.brainpop.com
- “In City’s Trans Fat Ban, a Challenge Fit for a Chef,” New York Times, December 11, 2006, p. B1.
- Images included are Wendy’s Triple Baconators from www.wendys.com and <http://baconbaconbacon.tumblr.com/post/99392102/bigbaconator>
- www.wendys.com
- www.dominos.com
- www.subway.com
- www.mcdonalds.com
- www.americanheart.org
- www.greenhosp.org/news_specialevents_0110_women.asp
- <http://en.wikipedia.org>