



New York City Bans Trans Fat

Department of Health of NY City, shows Trans Fats the Door, after voting unanimously to ban the substance from the city's restaurants.

Partially hydrogenated vegetable oil, also known as trans fat, was officially shown the door today in New York City as the department of health voted unanimously to ban the substance from the city's restaurants.

Under the approved ban, restaurants have until July 1, 2007 to switch to oils, margarine, and shortening with less than 0.5 g of trans fat per serving and until July 1, 2008 to eliminate trans fat from all other foods. The New York City plan is believed to affect approximately 24 000 establishments, ranging from McDonald's and Burger King to chic bistros and neighborhood delis. The new rules allow restaurants to serve foods that come in the manufacturer's original packaging.

The proposed ban to eliminate trans fat and to make caloric labeling mandatory, another measure approved by the department of health, was supported by a number of organizations, including the American College of Cardiology, American Diabetes Association, National Hispanic Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Center for Science in the Public Interest. The American Heart Association offered only conditional support for the ban, saying it would prefer the plan be phased in slowly, which would give restaurants time to adapt, as well as ensuring that heart-healthy oils were available, both physically and financially, to restaurants looking to make the change.

Health Commissioner Dr Thomas Frieden said officials took concerns from the restaurant industry into consideration, noting that the board of health extended the amount of time they would have to replace trans fat cooking oils and shortening, as well as the amount of time needed to phase trans fat out altogether. "We know that trans fats increase the chance of heart attack, stroke, and death, and they don't have to be there," Frieden told a news conference after the vote.

A spokesperson for the National Restaurant Association, one of the groups that did not support the ban, told the New York Times that the proposals were "an attempt at misguided social engineering by a group of physicians that don't understand the restaurant industry. [1]"

Newman M. City health board approves ban on trans fats. New York Times, December 5, 2006.
Available at: <http://www.nytimes.com>.

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