

'Bad' fats targeted in new global health guidelines

People everywhere need to cut down on their consumption of artery-clogging fatty foods, the World Health Organization ([WHO](#)) is urging, in a new report released on Friday.

The initiative is a bid to prevent some of the 17 million deaths caused every year by cardiovascular diseases, which have been linked to food containing saturated fats and trans-fats.

Saturated fats are commonly found in butter, salmon, egg yolks and cows' milk.

WHO wants adults and children to reduce their intake of these fats to just 10 per cent of total daily energy needs.

And the UN health agency wants trans-fats – which are found in baked and fried foods and cooking oil – to account for just one per cent of daily calorie intake.

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The good news is that there are healthier alternatives to food laden with “bad” saturated and trans-fats which are often labelled as “hydrogenated”– an indication that hydrogen has been added, making them easier to use.

“If we really want to get rid of the dangers of the excess trans-fat then there must be a very strong, energetic action from governments to ensure that manufactured products do not use hydrogenated vegetable oil,” said Dr. Francesco Branca, WHO's nutrition director.

“The removal of trans-fat which has been done in many countries is not even noticed by the consumer,” he added, “so the producers can use another fat with the same property and you can have your wonderful croissant that does not contain any trans-fats.”

Before WHO publishes its draft guidelines officially later this year, it intends to hold public consultations around the world to ensure that they best meet regional needs.

Dr Branca highlighted that since the UN agency first issued advice on saturated and trans-fats in 2002, there has been significant progress in raising awareness about the threat they pose – particularly in richer nations.

But although Western Europe has “almost eliminated” industrial trans-fat use today and Denmark has banned it altogether, Dr Branca cautioned that poorer regions faced major challenges in tackling the threat.

These include several countries in Eastern Europe, as well as India, Pakistan, Iran, many African states and Argentina.

In some cases Dr Branca warned that trans-fat levels in some popular street foods are as much as 200 times the recommended daily intake.