



For Immediate Release:

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LA County is Proud to Offer 0 Grams Artificial Trans Fat*

Now Is The Time To Change The Oil In Your Body's Engine
The Voluntary Artificial Trans Fat Reduction Program Begins

LOS ANGELES – County Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke and officials from the LA County Department of Public Health launched the Voluntary Artificial Trans Fat Reduction (ATFR) Program on November 15, 2007. The voluntary program is designed to recognize and distinguish eateries that are committed to providing healthier dining options for their patrons.

"I'm happy that this topic has stimulated discussion and provided an opportunity to educate the public about the use of trans fat. However, any recommendations by the County's Public Health Department would have been inconclusive without the input from restaurants, community health organizations and the County's Nutrition and Physical Activity Task Force," said Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke. "I'm also thrilled that a number of food chains have voluntarily eliminated trans fat from their foods, particularly several popular restaurants in the Second Supervisorial District. This partnership to eliminate the chemically modified compound is definitely a step in the right direction."

Participants in the Voluntary AFTR Program will agree not to store, distribute, serve or use in the preparation of any menu item partially hydrogenated vegetable oils, shortening, or margarines with 0.5 grams or more trans fat per serving.

*Federal regulations provide that foods with trans fat values of less than 0.5 grams per serving may be listed as zero grams of trans fat.

"Now is the time to change the oil in your body's engine. Strong scientific evidence suggests that eating a diet high in artificial trans fat contributes significantly to heart disease and the leading cause of premature death and disability in LA County is heart disease. Approximately 500,000 adults in the county have had a heart attack or have been diagnosed with some other form of heart disease," said Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer. "Public Health is committed to helping people reduce their intake of artificial trans fat in order to reduce their risk of heart disease. We are also committed to supporting facilities who take this forward-thinking step in offering healthier eating options."

The County worked with the City of Los Angeles, in particular Councilman José Huizar, the California Restaurant Association, and members of a taskforce to develop the voluntary program. The taskforce is comprised of restaurateurs, the California Restaurant Association, the California Grocers Association, health and food advocates, LA City and County staff, and members of the County's Public Health Commission.

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“Heart disease is the public health crisis of our time. There is no doubt in my mind that this critical effort will save lives,” said Councilmember José Huizar from the City of Los Angeles. “I am crusading for the health options of Angelenos and children. The ATFR program will allow people to become educated about trans fats and make informed decisions about the food items they purchase.”

“This program is a win-win for everyone. This has truly been a partnership of government, restaurants and advocates working together to develop a program that would work and be successful,” said Dr. Fielding. “Supervisor Burke and Councilman Huizar’s leadership helped propel the County into action and we look forward to seeing this program implemented. Consumers will now have one more tool in their arsenal to make informed decisions on where they can find healthy dining options.”

The Voluntary ATFR Program came about after the Los Angeles County Second District Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke instructed the Director of Public Health in January, 2007 to develop a voluntary, incentive-based program for trans fat reduction in food sold in retail food facilities.

Public Health and the taskforce decided to create an application process where restaurant facilities could submit information about themselves and the kind of food they serve. After the application and one-time submission fee is received, personnel from Public Health’s Environmental Health Unit will conduct an inspection to determine if the facility qualifies as a 0 Grams Artificial Trans Fat* establishment. Qualifying restaurants will receive a window decal letting consumers know this is a heart-healthy establishment.

For more information on how to participate in the Voluntary Artificial Trans Fat Reduction Program, please visit www.lapublichealth.org or any local Environmental Health district office.

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises more than 4,000 employees and an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do, please visit <http://www.lapublichealth.org>.

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