



County of Sacramento

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEWS RELEASE

Sacramento County Prepares to Implement Trans Fat Ban

California first state in the nation to ban trans fat use in restaurants

(Sacramento, CA) – Beginning with the New Year, nearly 5,500 Sacramento County food establishments will be prohibited from using, storing, distributing or serving food prepared with oil, shortening or margarine containing artificial trans fats. Trans fats reportedly contribute to clogged arteries, strokes and coronary heart disease. AB 97 (Mendoza), signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger in 2008, will phase out the use of artificial trans fats in California restaurants beginning January 1, 2010. The full effect of the ban will take place on January 1, 2011. Deep frying of certain foods, like doughnuts, is exempt during the first year.

The ban does not apply to food sold or served in a manufacturer's original, sealed package. In addition, schools in California have already been barred from preparing food with trans fat.

Artificial trans fat is created through a process called hydrogenation. The process improves the shelf life of prepared foods and it enhances the flavor. It also turns liquid oils into solid fats, such as shortening and stick margarine, which have been used in french fries, baked goods, crackers, candies, snack foods, fried foods and other items.

Sacramento County Environmental Health Division has led a working group consisting of several local jurisdictions throughout the State, the California Restaurant Association, representatives from the California Department of Public Health, and industry representatives to interpret the law and provide materials to health departments and affected retailers to help them meet the new law.

Many local food establishments have already replaced artificial trans fats with healthier options states Environmental Management Department Director Val Siebal. "Our health inspectors will continue to work with owners and operators to provide the necessary guidance and information to ease the transition," Siebal adds.

For more information, see Sacramento County Environmental Health Division's compliance bulletin for food facility operators:

<http://www.emd.saccounty.net/Documents/Info/EH/Trans%20Fat%20Bulletin%2012-16-09.pdf>