

## Consumer FAQ - Nutrition Labeling

[Are all foods labeled “\*trans\* fat-free” good for me in terms of heart health?](#)

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[When the Nutrition Facts label lists “0 grams cholesterol” – or a food is advertised as being “cholesterol-free” – does that mean the food contains no saturated fats or \*trans\* fats?](#)

[When the Nutrition Facts label lists “0 grams cholesterol” – or a food is advertised as being “cholesterol-free” – does that mean the food does not affect my cholesterol levels?](#)



**Are all foods labeled “*trans* fat-free” good for me in terms of heart health?**

Not necessarily. Foods labeled “*trans* fat-free” may be high in saturated fats, which also raise your bad cholesterol levels and your risk of heart disease. Consider eating these types of foods only occasionally.

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**Are all foods labeled “*trans* fat-free” good for me in terms of nutrition?**

Not necessarily. If these “*trans* fat-free” foods lack nutrients, such as doughnuts or sweet rolls, then they are still low in nutrients and fiber, even when made with healthier oils. Consider eating these types of foods only occasionally.

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**Are all foods labeled “fat-free” good for me in terms of weight management?**

No. Foods which are “fat-free” can still be very high in calories and low in nutrients, such as fat-free cookies, sweets, desserts, and other snack foods. Choose foods like vegetables, fruits, fish and other seafood, whole-grain products (like whole-grain breads, cereals, pasta and rice), nuts, beans, and fat-free or low-fat dairy products.

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**When the Nutrition Facts label lists “0 grams *trans* fat” for the food, does that mean the food contains no *trans* fat whatsoever?**

Not necessarily. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) allows food companies to list the amount of *trans* fat as “0 grams” on the Nutrition Facts panel if the amount of *trans* fat is less than 0.5 grams per serving.

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**What does it mean when the Nutrition Facts label lists “0 grams *trans* fat” for the food but “partially hydrogenated oil” (a source of *trans* fats) is listed as an ingredient?**

FDA regulations state that the label value should be zero if a fat is contained at less than 0.5 grams per serving. This allows for accuracy despite limitations in detection methods. Sometimes a product contains partially hydrogenated vegetable oil, but the Nutrition Facts label lists “0 grams *trans* fat”. This usually means that the partially hydrogenated vegetable oil used contains minor amounts of *trans* fat and/or is used in small amounts. One example is using partially hydrogenated oil in a seasoning. When an ingredient is used in very small amounts, you can tell because it appears toward the end of the ingredient statement. Just note that if you eat several servings from a package that declares “0 *trans* fat” and partially hydrogenated oil is included on the ingredient list, it is possible to exceed your daily limit of *trans* fats.

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**When the Nutrition Facts label lists “0 grams cholesterol” – or a food is advertised as being “cholesterol-free” – does that mean the food contains no saturated fats or *trans* fats?**

Not necessarily. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) allows food companies to claim “cholesterol-free” as long as there are less than 2 milligrams of cholesterol and no more than 2 grams of saturated fat per serving.

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**When the Nutrition Facts label lists “0 grams cholesterol” – or a food is advertised as being “cholesterol-free” – does that mean the food does not affect my cholesterol levels?**

Not necessarily. Even if a food contains zero grams of cholesterol, it can be made with saturated fats – such as coconut and palm oils, and/or *trans* fats (like traditional stick margarines and shortenings). Saturated and *trans* fats raise LDL (“bad”) cholesterol levels in the blood and increase the risk of developing heart disease.

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