

Thailand officially prohibits partially hydrogenated oils in Food Products



The Thai Health Ministry has issued a new notification of the Ministry of Public Health No.388 B.E.2561 (2018) on 13th June 2018 and it was published in the Royal Gazette in July 2018 to make the ban plan officially effective. However, the notification shall come into force after 180 days from the day following the date of its publication in the Government Gazette.

The announcement has been made in line with the global movement to phase out partially hydrogenated oils by 2020 with its intention to ban trans-fat in bakery products, coffee creamers, margarine and frozen foods.

What's wrong with Partially Hydrogenated Oils (PHO)?

Partially Hydrogenated Oils (PHOs) are the major source of artificial trans-fat in the food supply. Trans fatty acids are formed during industrial partial hydrogenation of vegetable oil, a process widely

commercialized to produce solid fats. The consumption of industrially produced trans fatty acids (TFA) is associated with an increased risk of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), especially cardiovascular disease (CVD). They increase low density lipoproteins (LDL), triglycerides and insulin levels and reduce beneficial high density lipoproteins (HDL) where it implies a detrimental effect on human health (Downs et al., 2013; Dhaka et al., 2011).

Health Impact of Consuming Foods containing Trans Fat

There are approximately 540,000 deaths that can be attributed to the intake of industrially produced trans-fatty acids yearly. High trans-fat intake has increased the risk of death from any cause by 34%, coronary heart disease deaths by 28%, and coronary heart disease by 21% (WHO, 2018).

Role of World Health Organization (WHO)

World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended TFA elimination from the diet and has called for “national policies that virtually eliminate Partially Hydrogenated Vegetable Oils (PHVOs) in the food supply and replace with polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA) (Downs et al., 2013).

Besides, WHO has initiated a new program REPLACE, an action package that supports governments to ensure the prompt, complete and sustained elimination of industrially-produced trans fat from the food supply. The REPLACE action package provides a step-by-step guide for the elimination of industrially-produced trans fat from the global food supply (WHO, 2018).

FDA (The Food and Drug Administration) Regulation

In 2015, FDA has determined that PHOs are no longer Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS). For the majority of uses of PHOs, June 18, 2018, remains the date after which manufacturers cannot add PHOs to foods. However, FDA is allowing more time for products produced prior to June 18, 2018 to work their way

through distribution to allow for an orderly transition in the marketplace. On top of that, FDA is extending the compliance date for these foods to January 1, 2020. This is to balance the health benefits of removing PHOs from the food supply with the need to provide an orderly transition in the marketplace (FDA, 2015).

Conclusion

The Thai Public Health Ministry has banned the production, import and distribution of food containing trans fat. They are strongly support WHO with the new initiative program: the WHO REPLACE action package. Replacing trans fat with healthier oils and fats including monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats in the food supply is a low-cost way for both governments and citizens.

References

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