



# news release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **NEW YORK STATE APPROVES WESTCHESTER COUNTY BAN ON TRANS-FAT OIL USE**

With its recipe for healthier food preparation, Westchester County's ban on the use of cooking oils that contain trans-fat is now in effect for restaurants, school cafeterias and other licensed food service establishments.

Starting today, Health Department inspectors will check for trans-fat oils whenever they inspect restaurants and other licensed food service establishments. Those still using trans-fat oils will be issued a violation if illegal cooking oils are found, but will not be fined as long as they switch oils. Letters to this effect were sent to all licensed food service businesses yesterday.

After the 90-day grace period ends on April 8, restaurants and other food service businesses that do not comply with the new law will be cited and could be fined. The ban only covers cooking oil.

The ban took effect after the New York State Department of Health officially filed an amendment to the Westchester County Sanitary Code prohibiting the use of cooking oils that contain trans-fat by licensed food service establishments in the county. That amendment was passed by the Westchester County Board of Health on December 20, 2007, following a public hearing held in November at the Health Department offices in New Rochelle.

Food service operators can also find out more about the amendment by calling one of the Health Department District Offices below:

New Rochelle District Office	813-5134
Mount Kisco District Office	864-7331
Yonkers District Office	231-2975

A substantial body of scientific evidence has demonstrated an association between trans-fat consumption and coronary heart disease. Trans-fat has been shown to increase levels of harmful LDL cholesterol and lower levels of beneficial HDL cholesterol. One study estimated that 23 percent of coronary heart disease events could be avoided by replacing trans-fats with healthier alternatives.

“The decision to pass this amendment was made by the Board of Health after hearing testimony on the scientific evidence of a clear association between dietary trans-fat and coronary heart disease,” said Dr. Joshua Lipsman, Commissioner of Health for Westchester County.

“The Board of Health is dedicated to improving the quality of life for all Westchester residents,” said Dr. Douglas Aspros, president of the Westchester County Board of Health. “No one will miss trans-fats in cooking oil and everyone’s health will be better for their absence.”

Voices in opposition to the ban were also heard at the public hearing in November, but supporters of the ban, including renowned nutritional experts Meir Stampfer of Harvard School of Public Health, Walter C. Willett of Harvard Medical School, and Michael F. Jacobson of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, presented a stronger case.

“You could save many lives at virtually no cost to citizens and the county and only a temporary modest cost and inconvenience to the restaurants,” said Dr. Jacobson in support of the ban.

“By participating in our BeFit Restaurant voluntary pledge initiative in the past, many local restaurants have already discovered that eliminating trans-fats need not compromise taste or increase costs significantly,” said Dr. Lipsman. “We believe this is a win-win situation for all concerned.”

For more information, please contact the Westchester County Health Department at (914) 813-5000 or visit the Health Department website at [www.westchestergov.com/health](http://www.westchestergov.com/health).