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SHOULD THE USE OF TRANSFATS IN FOODS BE REGULATED?

Word Generation - Unit 3.19

Focus Words

compile | odds | predominantly | widespread | regulation



WEEKLY PASSAGE

The **odds** are high that you have eaten many foods with trans fats, a kind of oil, in the last few days. The use of trans fats is **widespread**.

Predominantly found in fried and baked foods, such as French fries, doughnuts, cookies, pizza, and pastries, trans fats give these foods their delicious flavor and appealing texture. Manufacturers use trans fats because they help foods stay fresher longer. Researchers estimate that the average American consumes 5.8 grams of trans fats per day.

Trans fats are inexpensive to produce, so using them can lower the cost of producing food. But researchers say that people who eat foods with trans fats are more likely to have heart disease, strokes, and diabetes. The American Heart Association recommends we each limit the trans fats we consume to 2 grams per day. They say that the complete elimination of trans fats from the American diet would reduce heart disease by 10-20%.

In the U.S., big food chains like Starbucks and Wendy's have already stopped using trans fats. The city of New York passed a **regulation** banning trans fats from restaurants. Some countries, like Denmark, have banned trans fats from all foods.

Some people say the U.S. should ban all trans fats, too.

Others are against banning trans fats. They argue that it is the consumer's responsibility to decide what to eat and what to avoid eating. They think people are capable of using their own discretion. They say the government should **compile** data about trans fats to help educate consumers about this health issue, but let consumers make their own choices. People who are opposed to banning trans fats also point out that if people limit themselves to 2 grams per day, trans fats may not be a major health risk. Besides, these people say, Americans value freedom and their freedoms should include freedom to choose the treats you like.

What do you think? Should the government ban trans fats?

Should the use of transfats in foods be regulated?

FOCUS WORDS OF THE WEEK

widespread : (adjective) found over a wide area

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

predominantly : (adverb) greater in number or influence

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

regulation : (noun) order telling how something is to be done

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

odds : (noun) the probability or chance that something will happen or be so

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

compile : (verb) collect

FORMS:

EXAMPLES OF USE:

NOTES:

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PROBLEM OF THE WEEK



Option 1: When scientists and researchers **compiled** data about the dangers of trans fats, fast food restaurants got worried! They wanted to avoid legal **regulation**, so they began working to find alternatives to trans fats. Today, many fast food restaurants have menus that are **predominantly** trans fat-free. So, the **odds** are good that your fast food meal has only a few grams of trans fats, and it may even be trans fat-free. Still, most fast foods are high in calories, salt, sugar, and saturated fats.

Today, the Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) Chicken Pot Pie is trans fat-free.* But before worries about trans fats became **widespread**, a Chicken Pot Pie contained 14 grams of trans fats. The American Heart Association recommends that a person eat only 2 grams of trans fats each day. How many days worth of trans fats were in one of the old KFC Chicken Pot Pies?

- A) 10
- B) 5
- C) 7
- D) 14

*However, KFC's Chicken Pot Pie has a 790 calorie count, 410 of which are from fat. They contain 37 grams of saturated fats.

Option 2: Concern about the American diet is **widespread**. We all know that we should **regulate** our junk food intake. Jerrod, a sixth grader, eats **predominantly** at fast-food restaurants. He has **compiled** nutritional information from his favorite restaurants, and tries to make healthy choices. On Tuesday, he will choose one of two McDonald's breakfasts and one of three McDonald's lunches from the tables below.

Possible Breakfasts	Grams of Trans fats
McSkillet Burrito with Steak	1
Sausage Burrito	.5

Possible Lunches	Grams of Trans fats
Quarter Pounder	1
Double Cheeseburger	1.5
Angus Bacon & Cheese	2

Assuming that all combinations are equally likely, what are the **odds** that Jerrod will eat more than the American Heart Association's (AHA) daily recommendation of 2 grams of trans fats on Tuesday?

- A) 1/6
- B) 1/3
- C) 1/4
- D) 1/2

Math Discussion Question: Why did fast food restaurants cut back on trans fats? Was it the **widespread** worries about the American diet? Was it **predominantly** a desire to avoid **regulation**? What are the **odds** that fast food restaurants just wanted to help people be healthier? If you **compiled** a list of reasons for the change, what reasons would be on the list?



Should the use of trans fats in foods be regulated?

THINKING SCIENTIFICALLY

Ms. Kahn's science class was discussing a proposed **regulation** that would ban trans fats from school lunches and other foods for sale in school cafeterias. The regulation was inspired by the **widespread** use of trans fats in foods **predominantly** preferred by children and teens, such as chips, French fries, cookies, donuts, and other snacks and processed foods. The consumption of trans fats has been linked to coronary heart disease, diabetes, **obesity**, and liver problems. These are serious health problems that increase later in life and cost a lot of money to treat.

Some students argued against the ban. They believed that they should be able to eat what they want, no matter how unhealthy the food might be. Other students argued that the school must prevent **obesity** and other health problems by eliminating trans fats, just as requiring seat belts has prevented many injuries and deaths from car accidents.

Jamal suggested a compromise: "What if the school put warning labels on the foods with trans fats? Then the **odds** are that kids won't choose those foods."

"Warning labels won't make a difference," Marian argued. "They'll still eat the unhealthy foods!"

→ Ms. Kahn decided the class should conduct an investigation to see who was right, Jamal, or Marian. Would warning labels change students' eating habits? The students would label foods, interview students at the cafeteria, **compile** the data, and analyze the results.

Question:

Do warning labels change students' eating habits?

Hypothesis:

Students will not eat unhealthy foods when warning labels are placed on them.

Procedure:

1. **Compile** a list of foods sold in the school cafeteria, and identify those foods that contain trans fats. Create warning labels for all trans fat foods. Post signs explaining why trans fats are unhealthy and which foods contain them.
2. **Interview** each student who buys food after paying, using the following questions:
 - Did you buy any foods marked with a warning label?
 - Did the warning label have any effect on your choice?

Food with trans fats	Food without trans fats
Cheese crunchies, Double cookie crèmes, Corn nuggets, Powdered mini donuts	Fruit and nut mix, chips, Baked potato crisps, and Cookie grahams

N = Total number of students interviewed over five days.

N = 257



Question	Yes or No = # of students	Percentage = $100 \times (\# \text{ of students} \div N)$
Did you buy any foods marked with a warning label?	Yes = 188	
	No = 69	
Did the warning label have any effect on your choice?	Yes = 42	
	No = 215	

3. **Analyze** the results: Calculate the percentages in the data table for the students in Ms. Kahn's class.

- Who was right, Jamal or Marian? Cite specific evidence from the data table above to support your conclusion.
- Do you think bans on trans fats should be imposed on children and teens, but not on adults? Why or why not?
- How might you improve this study? Think about what additional information you could use to evaluate the effectiveness of labeling.

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DEBATING THE ISSUE



GO!

1. Get ready...

Pick one of these positions (or create your own).

A Foods prepared with trans fats are bad for your health. Trans fats should be totally banned by the government.

B Trans fats should not be banned. Consumers should make their own choices about what they eat. The government should educate the population about the risks of eating foods with trans fats but then let people make their own decisions.

C Trans fats should be banned, but the government should find ways to make healthy foods more affordable.

D The government should not ban trans fats. It should issue a regulation taxing the industries that produce food with trans fats. In this way, the government can help pay for the medical expenses of people who suffer the consequences of including trans fats in their diets.

E _____

Be a strong participant by using phrases like these.

I think it's more accurate to say...

That's interesting - can you tell why you think that?

I think the evidence is contrary to what you're saying because. . .

Let me share something from the reading that will help us...

2. Get set...

Be ready to provide evidence to back up your position during your class discussion or debate. Jot down a few quick notes:



Support your position with clear reasons and specific examples.
Try to use relevant words from the Word Generation list in your response.

compile | odds | predominantly | widespread | regulation

[illegible]