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News

Dole Diet Center

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TRANS FAT: BEELINE TO BELLY Harder to Burn, More Likely to Expand Middle

Yet another reason to eliminate trans fat from your diet: Not only does it raise levels of bad cholesterol (and lower levels of good cholesterol), new findings suggest it's harder to burn, and more likely to end up on your waist!

Researchers at Wake Forest Medical School fed two groups of monkeys a diet identical both in terms of total calories and the percentage of calories coming from fat (35%). The only difference was in the *kind* of fat: trans fat vs. healthy, monounsaturated fat. After six years, the trans fat-fed monkeys had increased their body weight by 7.2%, compared to only 1.8% for the monounsaturated fat-fed monkeys. Plus, the trans fat monkeys ended up with dramatically more abdominal fat.

We spoke with study co-author Lawrence Rudel, Ph.D., who observed that, "Diets rich in trans fat caused a redistribution of fat tissue into the abdomen and led to a higher body weight even when the total dietary calories are controlled."

Belly fat is even more harmful to your health than lower-body largesse. When fat swamps your internal organs, the toxins it secretes wreak havoc with insulin levels, hormones, and even metabolism (for more, read "Fat: It Doesn't Just 'Sit There'"). Fortunately, as this latest study suggests, the choices you make can affect not just overall weight, but also body shape. So, in addition to avoiding trans fat, try:

- **Strength training:** Overweight women who began lifting weights twice weekly not only reduced overall body fat by 4%, they reduced fat transfer

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to the midsection.

- Yoga: A study involving over 15,000 subjects found that yoga helped check middle-aged spread. Yoga helps reduce levels of the stress hormone cortisol, associated with increased abdominal fat.
- Every day activity: Researchers found that active rats denied access to their exercise wheel for just two days expanded their fat cells by nearly 20% on average, with the greatest proportional increase occurring in the abdomen.

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