



FIVE BILLION PEOPLE STILL AT RISK FROM INDUSTRIAL TRANS FAT EXPOSURE

22 May 2019 - Six countries restricted industrially produced trans fat since 2018, and another 24 countries, including the European Union, recently adopted trans fat regulations that will come into effect over the next two years. Yet, more than 110 countries still have no regulations against this harmful compound, meaning five billion people are at risk for industrially produced trans fat exposure in the foods they eat every day, according to the first annual global progress report on trans fat elimination issued today by WHO.

Trans fat causes estimated half a million deaths each year, despite data that show an immediate and long-lasting health benefits when industrially-produced trans fat is removed from the food supply.

The new report summarizes country actions to ban industrially produced trans fat and makes recommendations for action to achieve the 2023 goal for global elimination. WHO also released detailed step-by-step implementation modules in the REPLACE action package, which gives countries exact guidance on how to cut industrially-produced trans fat from their foods and save lives.

“Momentum is growing for the global elimination of industrially-produced trans fat, with nearly one third of the world’s population in 28 countries now protected from its harms,” said WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. “But more than two-thirds of the world’s population lacks protection from industrial trans fat in their food. WHO stands ready to support elimination efforts in the remaining countries. We welcome industry commitments to reformulate and remove trans fat from their products.”

A few highlights from the annual report include:

Thailand implemented best practice regulations to eliminate industrially-produced trans fat in January 2019
The European Union adopted in 2018 best practice regulations to eliminate industrially-produced trans fat in foods. The regulations will come into effect by 2021.

India released draft regulations in December 2018 to further lower limits for industrially-produced trans fat to 2%

Turkey released draft best practice regulations in January 2019 against trans fat

More than 40 countries began activities to limit trans fat

“Eliminating artificial trans fat is one of the simplest and most effective ways to save lives and create a healthier food supply,” said Dr. Tom Frieden, President and CEO of Resolve to Save Lives, an initiative of Vital Strategies. “Progress eliminating trans fat has been uneven. The new REPLACE modules provide detailed guidance on cutting trans fat from the food supply. There’s no excuse to delay taking action to eliminate trans fat.”

The inaugural progress report also shows most of the policy action against trans fat has been in high-income countries. No low-income country and only three lower-middle-income countries (India, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan) have trans fat policies. This new map shows where actions have, and have not, been taken (1).

Building on the lessons and recommendations in the annual progress report, the REPLACE modules help countries take action. The modules provide practical and evidence-based guidance on how to implement best practice policies.

Recently, food companies of the International Food and Beverage Alliance have committed to eliminate industrial trans fats from all their products globally by 2023.

WHO urges action against industrially-produced trans fat from countries, regional bodies and industry. When industrially-produced trans fat is finally cut from the global food supply, it will save millions of lives, be the first risk factor for a noncommunicable disease ever eliminated, and prove that substantial progress against noncommunicable diseases is possible.

Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/07-05-2019-who-welcomes-industry-action-to-align-with-global-trans-fat-elimination-targets>

ADOPTING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE HELPS REDUCE THE RISK OF DEMENTIA

14 May 2019 - People can reduce their risk of dementia by getting regular exercise, not smoking, avoiding harmful use of alcohol, controlling their weight, eating a healthy diet, and maintaining healthy blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels, according to new guidelines issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) today.

“In the next 30 years, the number of people with dementia is expected to triple,” said WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. “We need to do everything we can to reduce our risk of dementia. The scientific evidence gathered for these Guidelines confirm what we have suspected for some time, that what is good for our heart, is also good for our brain.”

The Guidelines provide the knowledge base for health-care providers to advise patients on what they can do to help prevent cognitive decline and dementia. They will also be useful for governments, policy-makers and planning authorities to guide them in developing policy and designing programmes that encourage healthy lifestyles.

The reduction of risk factors for dementia is one of several areas of action included in WHO’s Global action plan for the public health response to dementia. Other areas include: strengthening information systems for dementia; diagnosis, treatment and care; supporting carers of people with dementia; and research and innovation.

WHO’s Global Dementia Observatory, launched in December 2017, is a compilation of information about country activities and resources for dementia, such as national plans, dementia-friendly initiatives, awareness campaigns and facilities for care. Data from 21 countries, including Bangladesh, Chile, France, Japan, Jordan and Togo, have already been included, with a total of 80 countries now engaged in providing data.

Creating national policies and plans for dementia are among WHO’s key recommendations for countries in their efforts to manage this growing health challenge. During 2018, WHO provided support to countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Qatar, Slovenia and Sri Lanka to help them develop a comprehensive, multi-sectoral public health response to dementia.

An essential element of every national dementia plan is support for carers of people with dementia, said Dr Dévora Kestel, Director of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse at WHO. “Dementia carers are very often family members who need to make considerable adjustments to their family and professional lives to care for their loved ones. This is why WHO created iSupport. iSupport is an online training programme providing carers of people with dementia with advice on overall management of care, dealing with behaviour changes and how to