

Minister of Health



Ministre de la Santé

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0K9

FEB 26 2010

Ms. Linda Stewart
Executive Director
Association of Local Public Health Agencies
502-425 University Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1T6

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aIPHa

Dear Ms. Stewart:

Thank you for your correspondence of August 10, 2009, concerning trans fat in the Canadian food supply and the rising rates of childhood obesity. I regret the delay in responding.

Canadians are increasingly aware of and are concerned about the deleterious effects that trans fats have on human health. They not only increase low-density lipoprotein (LDL), the "bad" cholesterol, but also decrease high-density lipoprotein (HDL), the "good" cholesterol, thus increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Health Canada has pursued a multifaceted approach, including mandatory nutrition labelling, to decrease trans fat levels in foods. Canada was the first country to require that the levels of trans fat in prepackaged foods be included on the mandatory Nutrition Facts table. This table lists the amount of trans and saturated fat a product contains, as well as other important nutrition information. Also, *Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide*, revised in 2007, explicitly recommends limiting trans fat and saturated fat intakes.

The Department recommends that the trans fat content of vegetable oils and soft, spreadable margarines be limited to two percent of the total fat content, and for all other foods to five percent. Health Canada has been closely monitoring the industry's progress in meeting the recommended targets through its Trans Fat Monitoring Program.

Canada continues to make progress toward reducing the amount of trans fat in the Canadian food supply. According to data released recently, 73 percent of the prepackaged foods selected for review met the trans fat targets adopted in 2007, and 74 percent of foods from small- and medium-sized family and quick service restaurants and cafeterias did as well. However, some bakery products (donuts, cookies) and desserts remain high in trans fat.

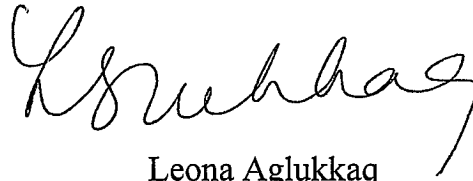
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Canada

Health Canada will continue to analyze the results of the Trans Fat Monitoring Program and engage stakeholders in consultations this year to further clarify challenges that remain in meeting trans fat targets.

Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leona Aglukkaq', written in a cursive style.

Leona Aglukkaq