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Fried food turns healthy, finally

Frito Lay, Part Of PepsiCo, Makes Snacks Range Trans-Fat Free

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SAVOUR 'em with a smile. The fried food which you always wanted to have, but somehow resisted, are turning more 'healthy' for you. In fact, leading snack foods company Frito Lay has made its entire snacks range - Lays, Kurkure, Cheetos, Uncle Chips & Lehar - more 'health-friendly' by making it totally trans-fat free. This follows a global PepsiCo initiative post-USFDA guidelines on trans fatty acids.

The move assumes importance: keeping in mind a comprehensive review of studies of trans fats, published in 2006 in the New England Journal of Medicine, which concludes that there is a strong and reliable connection between trans fat consumption and coronary heart disease (CHD). Since the USFDA began re-

quiring trans fats listings on food labels, food producers have been making a conscious effort to reduce the use of trans fatty acids and to find alternative fat sources. Some companies are also modifying their products to conform to international guidelines on their own and declaring the trans fat content on labels.

Says Sucheta Govil, marketing director, Frito Lay India: "At Frito Lay India, consumer welfare has always been paramount. All our brands, Lays, Kurkure, Cheetos, Uncle Chips, Lehar have always been made in natural vegetable refined oils, which do not have any trans fatty acids."

Trans fat, found in fast food products made with hydrogenated oil in an unregulated market, is already a time bomb waiting to explode in India. Even the Union health ministry is contemplating making it mandatory for processed food manufacturers to list the trans fat content on nutrition labels. The branded salty snack in-

dustry is estimated to be worth 1,00,000 tonnes per annum and experts feel that this sort of initiative will be more rigorously followed considering the alarm bells ringing around use of trans fats use in snacks and baked products such as cookies and biscuits.

"It is a matter of great concern that intake of trans fatty acids in urban adolescents (Delhi) is high (2.67g/day). This is solely contributed by an increased intake of high fat foods (pizza, chole-bhature, samosa, tikki, etc). Excessive intake of trans fatty acids poses a risk for development of diabetes and CVD in early 20s and 30s. We have also seen that 13-25% of urban Indian adolescents have high levels of C-reactive protein (CRP) which is possibly due to intake of trans fatty acids, which would predispose them to early development of diabetes and CVD," says Prof Dr Anoop Misra, director, Fortis.