

# TRANS FAT ELIMINATION

## Reasons for Policy Action Now

**Artificial trans fat is a man-made compound still used in some countries in fried food, deep-fried food, baked goods and spreads.**

- Trans fat was previously estimated to cause more than 500,000 deaths per year worldwide.<sup>1</sup>
- Trans fat can be eliminated and replaced with healthier alternatives, and many governments have already successfully protected their people. But protection from trans fat has mostly been for people living in wealthy countries.
- Since all people, in all countries, must be protected from the risks of trans fat consumption, the World Health Organization has called for global elimination of artificial trans fat by 2025 with the REPLACE initiative.



**Almost half of the world's population is protected by mandatory trans fat limits.**



**Momentum for trans fat elimination is growing, and best practice limits or bans of partially hydrogenated oils are currently in effect in 57 countries, covering 3.7 billion people.<sup>2</sup>**

- Between April 2018 and Dec 2023, 43 countries enacted best practice trans fat policies; as of the start of 2024, 40 of these are already in effect.
- In total 57 countries have introduced trans fat regulations since 2003, covering approximately 48% of the world's population.
- Just five countries — China, Pakistan, Russia, Indonesia and Iran — account for an estimated two-thirds of remaining trans fat-related deaths.



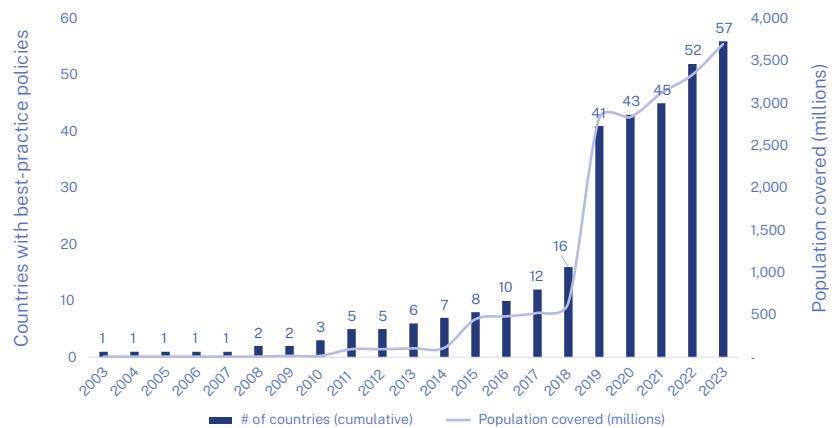
## Eliminating artificial trans fat is more important than ever.

Trans fat elimination and other nutrition and food policies, such as [sodium reduction](#), are central to countries' efforts to prevent non-communicable disease deaths and illnesses, reduce health care costs and improve diet quality for people of all ages. Evidence shows that even in countries with low trans fat burden, eliminating trans fat saves lives and is cost saving.<sup>3</sup>

### The most effective way to reduce trans fat in the food supply is through regulatory action <sup>4,5</sup>

Two best-practice policy models are recommended by WHO to fully protect people from artificial trans fat:

- Mandatory national restrictions that limit artificial trans fat to 2% of total fat content in all foods; OR
- Mandatory national bans on the production or use of partially hydrogenated oils (PHO) in all foods.<sup>6</sup>



Although voluntary and labeling approaches can lead to reductions in artificial trans fat, products containing artificial trans fat remain on the market and may be consumed in high quantities by some.<sup>4,7,8</sup>

### TRANS FAT ELIMINATION IS:

**Life-saving:** Global trans fat elimination will save an estimated 17.5 million lives over the next 25 years and prevent avoidable suffering.<sup>9</sup>

**Cost-saving:** Eliminating trans fat will reduce health care costs by preventing heart attacks, which require costly care.<sup>3,10</sup>

**Feasible:** Artificial trans fat can be replaced in foods without changing taste or cost to the consumer.<sup>10</sup> Healthier alternatives are already in use.<sup>11</sup>

**A step toward health equity:** Eliminating trans fat can reduce inequalities in health, even in contexts with relatively low artificial trans fat intake.<sup>5</sup>

**Practical:** As more and more countries regulate trans fat, food manufacturers can reformulate products in the same way for sale in multiple countries, which can reduce R&D costs and allow for easier trade between countries and within regions. Because manufacturers selling products containing artificial trans fat may shift to new markets where elimination policies are not in place, implementing regulations before trans fat levels are high reduces future enforcement difficulty and cost.<sup>4</sup>

**An investment in overall nutrition and food safety:** Trans fat elimination is an opportunity to build regulatory systems that can be leveraged for food safety and for healthier foods.

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