

**A Success Story:  
Developing the Unsaturated Fat and  
Cholesterol Health Claim**

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# Permitted Health Claims

“A health claim is any representation in labelling or advertising that states, suggests, or implies that a **relationship** exists between consumption of a **food** or an ingredient in the food and a person's **health**.”

1. A healthy diet low in sodium and high in potassium and reduced risk of high blood pressure
2. A healthy diet with adequate calcium and vitamin D and reduced risk of osteoporosis
3. A healthy diet low in **saturated and trans fat** and reduced risk of heart disease
4. A healthy diet rich in vegetables and fruit and reduced risk of some types of cancers
5. Non-fermentable carbohydrates in gums and hard candies and reduction in dental caries

# New Health Claims in Canada

*Since 2010*

6. Approved 2010, plant sterols shown to help reduce/lower cholesterol in adults.
7. Approved 2011, oats and lowering of blood cholesterol
8. Approved 2011, psyllium and lowering of blood cholesterol
9. Approved 2012, Unsaturated fats and lowering of blood cholesterol

# Basis for Health Claim

- Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is a major chronic disease in Canadians
- Initial Canadian health claim permitted the recommendation that saturated/trans fat be avoided to reduce risk of heart disease (*negative health message*)
- Institute of Medicine (IOM) – monounsaturated and polyunsaturated (unsaturated) fat lowers blood cholesterol when they replace saturated fat in the diet (*positive health message*)

# How it Worked

- Involvement of multiple groups interacting independently
- VOIC petitioned Health Canada in 2007
- Health Canada provided guidance on the evaluation and review
- Universities provided expertise to conduct the scientific review

# Contributors

## **Petitioner to Health Canada:**

- Vegetable Oils Industry of Canada (VOIC)

## **Contributors:**

- University of Toronto - Program in Food Safety, Nutrition and Regulatory Affairs
- University of Guelph
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Soy 20/20

# Assessment and Findings

- Over 600 articles retrieved, 13 studies identified
- Assessment of causality and generalizeability
  - replacement of saturated fat with unsaturated fat significantly reduced blood cholesterol
  - Effects ranged between a few % up to 20%, within 2-4 weeks
  - Equivalent to moderate statin treatment
  - 1% reduction in cholesterol reduces CVD risk by ~1-2%

# Take Home Messages

- Success requires a committed Petitioner to lead
- Requires expertise and interactions between multiple groups/agencies
- Requires time, >4 yrs





Health  
Canada

Santé  
Canada

*Your health and  
safety... our priority.*

*Votre santé et votre  
sécurité... notre priorité.*

# **Summary of Health Canada's Assessment of a Health Claim about the Replacement of Saturated Fat with Mono- and Polyunsaturated Fat and Blood Cholesterol Lowering**

**February 2012**



Bureau of Nutritional Sciences  
Food Directorate  
Health Products and Food Branch

**Thank You**