Artificial trans fat is a man-made toxin that clogs arteries and causes heart attack and stroke.

Artificial trans fat is created by the chemical processing of vegetable oils, and is commonly used in India in products like margarine and bakery shortenings (used in preparation of bakery products) and vanaspati (used in preparation of sweets and deep-fried foods).

According to the World Health Organization, best practice trans fat regulations include limiting artificial trans fat to 2% of total fat in all fats, oils and foods.

Since August 2017, regulations in India have limited trans fats to no more than 5% (down from 10% in 2015) in four categories of fats and oils only.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has proposed draft regulations to limit trans fat to 2% of all fats, oils and foods by January 2022.

In 2019, Vital Strategies conducted a survey of trans fat content in 320 samples of ready-to-eat foods from two markets in Delhi (New Delhi Railway Station and Rohini Sector 7).

In 16% of foods, trans fat was more than 5% of total fat.

In 48% of foods, trans fat was between 2% and 5% of total fat.

In 42% of Sweets including Kalakand, Peda, and Barfi

In 42% of Frozen Desserts including Kulfi

In 20% of Baked Foods including Fan, Biscuits, Donuts, & Muffins

In 13% of Miscellaneous Foods including Kulcha

In 8% of Fried Foods including Aloo Tikki, Pakora, Paani Poori, Vada

In 67% of Miscellaneous Foods including Burger, Pao Bhaji, Vada Pao

In 52% of Sweets including Laddoo, Moong Daal Halwa

In 48% of Fried Foods including Samosa, Bhatura, Bhujia

In 46% of Baked Foods including Cake, Rusks, Pizza

In 25% of Frozen Desserts including Ice Cream
Conclusions

- Nearly one in five of the food trans fat more than 5% of the total fat, indicating that they were prepared with fats and oils that exceeded the current legal limit.
- Only one third of foods were prepared with fats and oils that meet the proposed limit of 2% trans fats in all foods, fats, and oils.
- Non-compliance was highest in baked foods and sweets.
- To reach the goal of a trans fats free India by 2022, the government may:
  - Enact the current draft regulations for a trans fat limit of 2% of total fat in all foods, fats, and oils.
  - Implement well-structured monitoring of trans fat limits in foods, fats, and oils across the country to ensure compliance with regulations.

Table 1: Trans fat per 100 gm of total fat content in commonly available food products in Delhi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Type</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
<th>Distribution of Trans Fat Content Within Food Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&lt;2 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baked</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>34.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fried</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweets</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen Dessert</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>35.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>