

Content of trans fatty acids in margarines on the Swedish market

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The content of fatty acids in margarines and cooking fats changes over time due to product development. To receive current nutrient values on the fat quality in the most common margarines in Sweden, fatty acids were analysed during 2009 and 2010 at the National Food Agency. The whole range of fatty acids and trans fatty acids were analysed and the content of saturated, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat as well as n3 and n6 fatty acids were calculated in the margarines.

Trans fatty acids have been extensive occurring in margarines and cooking fats, especially margarines used by the industry for pastries and bakery products. Analyses in the late 80's established high levels of trans fatty acids in food products on the Swedish market. The intake of trans fatty acids is associated with higher risk of cardiovascular disease. For many years there has been a dialogue between the National Food Agency and Swedish food producers to replace trans fatty acid containing fats with healthier fats.

The presented results show that the most common margarines and cooking fats on the Swedish market now have a content of trans fatty acids below one percent (except the ones containing dairy fat). This is an example of the adaptability of the Swedish food industry to demands from authorities and consumers. The National Food Agency will continue to analyse margarines and cooking fats in order to control that the content of trans fatty acids remains low in Swedish food products.