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NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport

B.C. TACKLES TRANS FAT IN FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS

VICTORIA – B.C.’s new trans fat regulation will come into effect Sept. 30, 2009, restricting industrially produced trans fat at food service establishments throughout the province, announced Ida Chong, Minister of Healthy Living and Sport.

“B.C. is the first province in Canada to restrict trans fat in all prepared foods,” said Chong. “We want healthier food choices to be the easier choice. Consumers won’t see or taste the difference in the meal they’ve ordered, but with restrictions on industrially produced trans fat, they will be eating foods that have been prepared using healthier ingredients.”

Through the revised Public Health Act, all establishments requiring a permit to operate a food service in B.C. must comply with the new regulation. Following a throne speech commitment from 2008, the Province announced in March 2009 that the provincial trans fat regulation would come into effect Sep 30, 2009. The Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon has partnered with government to support the regulation, which affects restaurants, delis, cafeterias, educational institutions, health-care institutions, schools, special events and most bakeries.

“Restricting trans fat in all prepared foods supports healthier lifestyles for everyone who eats at a restaurant in B.C., now and in the years ahead,” said Mary McNeil, Minister of State for the Olympics and ActNow BC. “This new regulation builds on ActNow BC’s goal for the province to become the healthiest region to host an Olympic and Paralympic Games.”

Pre-packaged foods with a Canadian Nutrition Facts table on the package sold or offered directly to the consumer without alteration are exempt from the trans fat restrictions. Consumers will still need to make healthy choices as outlined in ‘Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide.’

“Trans fat is responsible for an estimated 3,000 heart disease-related deaths in Canada each year,” said Bobbe Wood, president and CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of BC & Yukon. “We are pleased to support the first provincial restriction of trans fat in Canada, and set the regulations for other jurisdictions to follow.”

Restrictions specify that all soft spreadable margarine and oil meet the restriction of two per cent trans fat or less of total fat content. All other food must meet the restriction of five per cent trans fat or less of total fat content. The regulation follows the recommendations of Health Canada’s Trans Fat Task Force. Environmental health officers in health authorities will take a progressive enforcement approach for the new regulatory requirements, which includes education and information for food service establishments who are not already compliant.

Trans fat comes in two forms. One form is naturally occurring, in ruminant meat (i.e. beef or

lamb) and dairy products. The other is industrially produced, in partially-hydrogenated oils, margarines and shortenings, and hidden in prepared foods like donuts, croissants and other baked goods.

Foods in which trans fat comes entirely from naturally occurring sources are exempt from the restrictions and do not pose the same harmful effects as industrially produced trans fat. Industrially produced trans fat increases a person's risk of coronary heart disease by raising levels of bad cholesterol and lowering levels of good cholesterol, leading to clogged arteries.

The food industry in B.C. is well supported in making the transition to restrict industrially produced trans fat. A phone line through Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 is available Monday to Friday between 9 a.m.-5 p.m., as well as a website at www.restricttransfat.ca.

ActNow BC, the province's healthy living initiative, supports British Columbians in make healthy lifestyle choices. For more information, go to www.actnowbc.ca.

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