

Cara Restaurants Reduce Trans Fats Across the Country

Five Canadian restaurant chains adopt new national trans fats limits months before required

MISSISSAUGA, ON, Dec. 21 /CNW/ - Cara Operations Limited (Cara) announced today that its five Canadian restaurant chains - Swiss Chalet, Milestones, Montana's, Kelsey's and Harvey's - will use vegetable oils and spreads that have two per cent or fewer trans fats in the new year. More than 700 of Cara's restaurants across Canada will transition to use non-hydrogenated margarines and oils in the first few months of 2008 - well ahead of the timelines set out by the federal government for adopting and implementing the recommendations of the national Trans Fat Task Force.

"Cara is poised to be the first national, full-service branded restaurant company to meet the Trans Fat Task Force's recommended limits," said Charles Hayes, Vice President Food and Beverage Design, Cara Operations Limited. "Cara remains committed to ensuring healthy choices for Canadians, in fact, Harvey's was the first quick-service restaurant in Canada to use a trans fat free cooking oil, implemented concurrently by the other Cara chains. Today's announcement is the next step in further reducing trans fats from our ingredients and menu items. Now, more than ever, Guests have healthier options when dining in our restaurants."

Cara implemented changes to the cooking and preparation procedures at its restaurants chains, including proactively reducing the amount of trans fats through the use of non-hydrogenated oils and spreads and in sauces, marinades and salad dressings. Cara's chefs and food preparation staff will use a trans fat free canola oil. In some cases, Cara's restaurants also prepare their sauces and spreads daily, thereby reducing or eliminating the need for trans fats.

"We applaud Cara for its move today in implementing reductions to trans fats so quickly and across so many brands and locations," said Sally Brown, CEO of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada and co-chair of the Trans Fat Task Force. "We are pleased to see leadership by Cara in helping Canadians reduce their intake of trans fats. This is a great direction for 2008."

The Task Force's recommended two per cent trans fat limit relates specifically to partially hydrogenated vegetable oils, shortenings, margarines used for deep-frying, frying, pan-frying, grilling or those used as spreads. Naturally occurring trans fats, such as those found in dairy and meat are not subject to these limits.

In addition to the trans fat announcement, Cara also announced today that detailed nutritional information will be available for all its restaurants online and in printed form in restaurants by January 1, 2008. This information may be helpful to Canadians making healthy resolutions in the New Year.

"Cara is dedicated to providing fresh and healthy meal choices for Canadians," says Hayes. "In our efforts to provide the perfect Guest experience, we believe that our Guests shouldn't have to be concerned with excessive hydrogenated oils and fats. And we believe making this change right now, is the right thing to do."

All of Cara's restaurants offer healthy menu items, some of the most popular examples are:- Swiss Chalet chicken is Rotisserie chicken, which means it is slow cooked in its own juices. In addition, there are several menu options with the Heart and Stroke Foundation's Health Check Symbol™ - this program, based on Canada's Food Guide, helps consumers identify healthy meal choices.

- Montana's offers many healthy side choices including spinach salad, baked beans, baked potato or steamed vegetables.
- Harvey's was the first national hamburger chain in Canada to offer trans fats free menu options; in addition, a bottle of water can substitute a fountain pop at no additional charge.
- Milestones offers lighter choices including a grilled seafood salad, which provides many essential nutrients and offers a lower calorie option than other menu options.
- Kelsey's offers steamed vegetables, baked potatoes and the Sonoma salad as healthy side dishes with meals.

Cara fast-tracked its activities in Calgary to allow the company's restaurants in that area to be fully compliant with the new Calgary Health Region guidelines that come into effect on January 1, 2008. Hayes added that in getting ready to meet the Calgary trans fat requirements, the company made the decision to extend the reductions earlier than required across all markets.

Cara Operations Limited is Canada's leading branded restaurant and airline services organization. The company is more than 120 years old and operates some of the most recognized brands in the country including Swiss Chalet Rotisserie & Grill, Milestones Grill and Bar, Montana's Cookhouse, Kelsey's Neighbourhood Bar & Grill, Harvey's and Airline Solutions. For more information visit www.cara.com.

For further information:

For further information: To schedule an interview, please contact Cara Public Affairs, Katie Clark, (416) 979-1979 ext No. 284; or Jennifer Link, Edelman Public Relations, Tel: (416) 979-1120 ext No. 235, Jennifer.link@edelman.com

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