

# Omega 3 Fats

## What you need to know:



### Heart Benefits

Research shows that the Omega-3s called EPA (Eicosapentaenoic Acid) and DHA (Docosahexaenoic Acid) contribute to your cardiovascular health in many ways. Both EPA and DHA help to combat plaque and they help to prevent blood clots from developing in your arteries. These arterial plaque deposits and blood clots can block blood flow in your arteries, leading to strokes, heart attacks and other cardiovascular conditions. The American Heart Association recognizes EPA and DHA as being effective for:

- Risk reduction of strokes and heart attacks
- Healthy arteries and lowering of blood pressure
- Prevention of heart beat abnormalities and arrhythmia
- Reduction in Sudden Cardiac Death
- Blood triglyceride reduction
- Increasing good HDL cholesterol
- Thinning the blood – similar to aspirin
- Prevention of plaque and hardening of the arteries
- Prevention of plaque fat rupture
- Good overall heart health

Increased intake of omega-3 fats also reduce inflammation in the body and can be useful for diseases such as arthritis and other inflammatory diseases. Research is beginning to link inflammation and diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and stroke.

The best sources of omega-3 fats are oily fish like salmon, tuna, herring, mackerel and sardines. These fish are excellent sources of DHA and EPA – two specific types of omega-3 fats that have been linked to a number of biological functions, including several key mechanisms that support heart health.

Omega 3 fish oils have been shown to help maintain a healthy heart by reducing the risk of blood clots that cause heart attacks, lowering triglycerides, protecting against irregular heart beats that cause sudden cardiac death, and lowering blood pressure.

Plant sources of omega 3 fats such as flaxseed, walnut and canola oil are not as bioavailable as fish sources, meaning that the body cannot utilize plant sources efficiently. Mind you, these all all healthy foods, however they are not good sources of omega 3 fats.

### **AHA Guidelines:**

1. For heart health, healthy adults should eat fish at least twice a week. That means fatty fish like salmon and tuna, not white fish. Fried fish from restaurants or the frozen section of your grocery are not good sources of omega-3 fats. Some of them are high in trans fatty acids and should be avoided.
2. In addition to eating fish, try substituting omega-3 rich oils, such as flaxseed, canola, walnut and soybean oils, for regular vegetable oil.
3. If you have coronary heart disease, you need to consume about 1 gram of EPA + DHA per day, preferably from fish.
4. Fish oil supplements may be considered if you cannot get fish or do not like it, but consult your physician first.
5. If you are on a triglyceride-lowering diet, you need 2-4 grams of EPA + DHA oil per day. This should be done under a physician's care.

### **Recommended Brands:**

- Nordic Naturals
- Metagenics

**Remember:** EPA and DHA are the active components. Be sure that you read the label and the EPA + DHA add up to the recommended dose.

Nordic Naturals available at Whole Foods, Vitamin Cottage  
Metagenics available through healthcare providers



South Denver Cardiology Associates, P.C. 2007