



The Triple-Action Power of Omega-3

Three Ways This Essential Nutrient Can Benefit Your Health



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Stay Healthy, Live Better



Omega-3 101

You've heard of them, and you know they're important. But just what are omega-3s, where can you find them, and what can they do for you? Here's some essential info on these essential fatty acids — including how you can check your own omega levels!



A Weapon Against Chronic Inflammation

Find out how omega-3 can help reduce chronic inflammation — and lessen your risk for everything from diabetes to Alzheimer's disease. And for you non-fish eaters out there, we'll show you some great vegetarian sources for omega-3!



Battling Depression with Omega-3

Promising research shows how omega-3 could be a valuable resource in the fight against depression. Get the facts, plus tips on how you can avoid fish oil users' most common complaints — including fishy burps ... yuck!



Omega-3 for a Healthy Heart

Omega-3 has long been touted for its heart-healthy benefits, and the latest studies continue to back this up. Learn how omega-3 can help your heart. Then, discover the secrets to finding the best fish oil supplements out there!



#1

Omega-3 101



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Omega-3 has been a hot health topic in recent years — and with good reason. The health benefits of these essential fatty acids are remarkable and wide-ranging. And we're not even done learning about all that omega-3s can do!

Let's get started by finding out just what omega-3s are, where to get them, and what they can do for your health.

Good Fats vs. Bad Fats

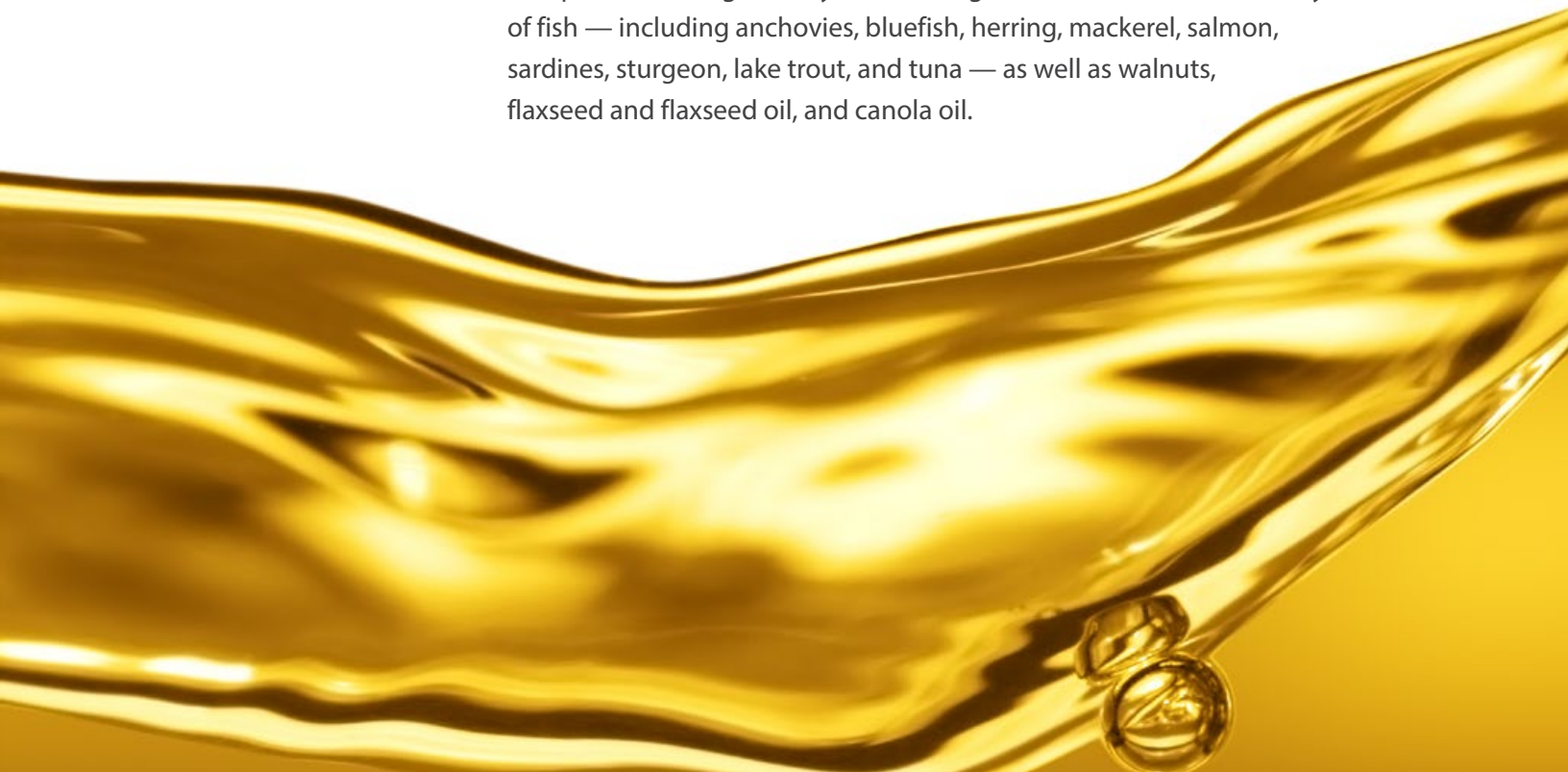
Sometimes it seems like “fat” is a bad word. And with all the fat-free and low-fat products out there, it's understandable that we often have a negative association with the word. But while some fats are bad for your health, some are an essential part of a healthy diet.

That's why it's so important to know the difference between good and bad fats. There's debate, however, on what is a good fat and a bad fat. But here's what most people agree on:

Trans fats are the worst kinds of fats! They raise your bad cholesterol, lower your good cholesterol, and increase your risk of developing heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes.

Unsaturated fats are good fats! They provide essential fatty acids, help deliver vitamins A and D, and supply omega-3s for heart and brain development.

One type of unsaturated fat is polyunsaturated fat, and that's the one that provides omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3s can be found in a variety of fish — including anchovies, bluefish, herring, mackerel, salmon, sardines, sturgeon, lake trout, and tuna — as well as walnuts, flaxseed and flaxseed oil, and canola oil.



Not All Omega-3s Are Equal

Omega-3 fatty acids come in carbon chains, and it's the longer-chain forms of omega-3 — called eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) — that are the most beneficial to our health. These vital omega-3s come primarily from fish sources.

What Can Omega-3s Do for Your Health?

Scores of studies have suggested that omega-3 fatty acids could be beneficial against a number of serious diseases, including heart disease, stroke, cancer, asthma, depression, rheumatoid arthritis, and Alzheimer's disease. These nutrients have also been found to help support a healthy mood, brain, eyesight, and immune systems.

In other words, omega-3s are really the whole package for the whole body!

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Omega-3 and Omega-6 — A Balancing Act

Getting enough omega-3s through diet alone can be difficult for many people. But that's not an issue with omega-6 fatty acids. Omega-6s, which come from seeds and nuts and their oils, are found everywhere in the modern, fast-food, processed diet, and today our bodies typically get far more omega-6s than omega-3s.

While omega-6 fatty acids are also polyunsaturated fatty acids, they differ from the omega-3s in their chemical structure. The hormones derived from omega-6s can increase inflammation!

It's estimated that many Americans eat a diet that has **10 to 25 times as many omega-6s as omega-3s**, and this imbalance may be playing a role in the rise of many diseases.

Sources:

WebMD, www.webmd.com

American Heart Association, www.heart.org



#2

**A Weapon
Against Chronic
Inflammation**

Omega-3: A Weapon Against Chronic Inflammation

One of omega-3's biggest health benefits is its effect on chronic inflammation, a sustained low level of inflammation that contributes to an astonishing array of serious diseases, from heart disease to diabetes to kidney disease.

Inflammation itself isn't necessarily a bad thing. In fact, acute inflammation is the body's response to a problem such as a tissue injury or infection. By increasing blood flow to the area, acute inflammation plays a key role in defending the body and working to prevent further damage.

When the threat to the body is resolved, the inflammation should decrease. And when we're younger, that's usually exactly what happens. However, as we age, our bodies lose the ability to control the inflammation, and that's when chronic inflammation occurs.

Increasing age isn't the only risk factor, however. Obesity, high saturated fat intake, and high sugar intake can all contribute to chronic inflammation.

A Serious Threat to Our Health

Not only is chronic, low-level inflammation a drain on the body's system, it also contributes to at least 7 of the 10 leading causes of death in the United States,¹⁻⁹ including:

- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Stroke
- Alzheimer's disease
- Kidney disease
- Chronic lower respiratory disease

We recommend getting specific blood tests to assess the inflammatory state within your body, especially if you think you might be at risk. The sooner you start fighting chronic inflammation, the sooner you can improve the state of your long-term health.



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Getting enough omega-3 fatty acids through your diet or supplements is a great way to fight chronic inflammation

Treating Chronic Inflammation with Omega-3

So how can you prevent and reduce chronic inflammation in your body?

In addition to dietary and lifestyle changes — such as a low-glycemic diet, reduced consumption of saturated fat and cholesterol, and increased exercise — getting enough omega-3 fatty acids through your diet or supplements is a great way to fight chronic inflammation.

Omega-3's effect on inflammation in various diseases has been well-documented. Not only have the anti-inflammatory effects of omega-3 fatty acids been shown to contribute to the prevention of cardiovascular disease and death,¹⁰ but omega-3s have also improved patient outcomes in studies of inflammatory diseases such as asthma and rheumatoid arthritis.^{11,12}

These findings make it clear why omega-3 should be an essential part of your healthcare regimen. However, it can be difficult to get enough omega-3s in your diet, especially if you don't eat a lot of fish. A fish oil supplement is a great way to make sure you're getting all you can out of omega-3!



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**Battling Depression
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**Omega-3 for a
Healthy Heart**



#3

**Battling
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Battling Depression with Omega-3

Chances are you know someone who suffers from depression. This often-debilitating condition continues to be a growing worldwide health problem,¹³ especially among older adults.

In recent years, researchers have been uncovering close links between depressive symptoms and chronic inflammation.¹⁴⁻¹⁶ And given what we know about omega-3's anti-inflammatory properties, perhaps it shouldn't be a surprise that many studies are finding that omega-3s can also be a powerful tool against depression.

A number of small studies have shown reductions in both inflammatory markers and depressive symptoms with omega-3 supplementation while others have demonstrated that omega-3 in conjunction with antidepressant treatment is superior to antidepressant treatment alone.^{12, 17-20}

Now a larger study out of Japan reveals a strong correlation between low levels of omega-3 fatty acids and depression, confirming that people with higher omega-3 blood levels have a significantly lower risk of depression.¹³

The Relationship Between Omega-3s and Depression

Featuring 2,123 subjects aged 40 years or older, this Japanese study used a standard 20-question scale of depressive symptoms and tested participants' blood for various types of fatty acids.¹³

In addition to discovering that those with the lowest levels of omega-3 fats in their blood had the highest risk of depression, researchers also found that those in the group with higher blood levels of omega-3s had a 43% lower risk of depression.¹³

The scientists then divided the subjects into groups based on their levels of EPA and DHA omega-3 fats. The subjects with the highest EPA levels showed a 36% lower risk of depression, while those with the highest DHA levels had a 42% lower risk.¹³

These exciting findings offer a hopeful step forward in the fight against depression — and make a strong case that people at risk for depressive illness should consider supplementing their diet with omega-3 fats, particularly EPA and DHA. And since aging puts us at risk for both inflammation and depression, everyone over the age of 40 should make sure that they're getting enough omega-3.²¹

Tips for Taking Fish Oils

While taking fish oil supplements, some people do experience minor issues, such as:

- Fishy burps or belching
- Stomach upset and indigestion
- Bloating
- Unpleasant taste in mouth

Fortunately, there are some steps you can take to minimize these complaints and still reap the benefits of fish oil. Here are a few tips:

- Start off slowly by taking just half the supplement dose at first and then working your way up to a full dose.
- Make sure your fish oil has a five-star rating from the International Fish Oil Standards (IFOS).
- Try freezing the softgels, which can help lessen the problem of “fishy” burping.
- Find a supplement with an enteric coating if you have a sensitive stomach.
- Take your fish oil with food.



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Omega-3 for a
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#4

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The omega-3 fatty acids found in fish oils are a vital cardioprotective nutrient. Higher fish intake has been associated with lower rates of heart failure, sudden cardiac death, heart attacks, and ischemic stroke.²²⁻²⁵

In addition to lowering triglycerides, raising HDL levels, and lowering blood pressure,²⁶ omega-3 also keeps your heart healthy by:

1

Reducing Inflammation

Inflammation plays an integral role in atherosclerosis, the buildup of plaque that causes a hardening and narrowing of the arteries, which in turn can lead to heart disease, heart attack, and stroke. Circulating inflammatory cytokines can be a predictor of stroke, and coronary heart disease.^{9,27}

We've already examined omega-3's anti-inflammatory properties, so it's no surprise that they help reduce inflammation in the heart as well.¹⁰ Researchers have also found that lowering the ratio of omega-6s to omega-3s reduces numerous measures of inflammation and significantly decreases the size of atherosclerotic plaques.²⁸

2

Improving Endothelial Function

The elasticity of healthy blood vessels helps to regulate blood pressure. However, as we age, we experience an increase in arterial stiffness, which is a risk factor for cardiovascular disease and death. Fortunately, omega-3 fatty acids have been found to help improve the function of the endothelium, a single layer of cells that line the inside of the arteries and is responsible for keeping arteries healthy and flexible.

One study involving 563 elderly men found that 2.4 grams per day of omega-3 supplementation improved arterial elasticity.²⁹

3

Lowering Arterial Plaque

Omega-3 oils also help to lower the levels of Lp-PLA2 (lipoprotein-associated phospholipase A2), a marker of inflammatory arterial plaque and an emerging risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

One recent study examined the correlation between tissue omega-3 fatty acid levels and measures of circulating Lp-PLA2 in more than 300 patients. Discovering a strong and inverse association between tissue omega-3 levels and Lp-PLA2, the researchers concluded that intake of omega-3 fatty acids may lower Lp-PLA2 levels and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.³⁰



How to Find a Quality Fish Oil Supplement

What's the source?

Sustainable fishing helps to both preserve the health of the oceans and ensure that we will have seafood supplies in the future. Look for a fish oil supplement that's sourced from a sustainability fishery certified by The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), an independent nonprofit organization that sets a standard for sustainable fishing.



Keep it fresh

Fats like fish oil tend to go rancid. And not only does rancid fish oil smell and taste bad, it's also not as effective of a nutritional supplement. That's why you should always make sure that your fish oil isn't expired — and use it up as soon as possible. We also recommend finding a supplement that contains an additional ingredient, such as standardized sesame lignans, to enhance the stability of the omega-3 nutrients.

Look for the (IFOS) Stars

A rating system for fish oils — who knew? But with all the concerns about contamination and efficacy, it makes sense. The International Fish Oil Standards (IFOS) examines the quality of omega-3 products based on the international standards for purity and concentration established by the World Health Organization and the Council for Responsible Nutrition. Look for their highest rating — five stars! — to make sure you're getting the safest and highest-quality fish oil out there.

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