

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

What are omega-3 fatty acids?

Omega-3 fatty acids include eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), found in fish, and alpha-linolenic acid, found in soy, canola oil, flaxseed, and English walnuts.

How can omega-3 fatty acids help my heart?

-There is evidence that omega-3 fatty acids, particularly EPA and DHA, prevent heart disease. In people who already have heart disease, they help prevent death, heart attack, and stroke.

-Recent studies show they can reduce arrhythmia in CHF patients.

-They also reduce triglycerides.

What is the best source of omega-3 fatty acids?

The best source of omega-3 fatty acids is fatty fish such as Salmon, Tuna, Mackerel, Herring and Sardines. The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends that everyone eat at least two fatty fish-containing meals (baked or broiled) weekly for Cardiovascular health.

Foods rich in alpha-linolenic acid are: Canola Oil, Soy, English Walnuts and Flaxseed. Fish oil capsules are a convenient way to get your omega-3 fatty acids, especially if you need high doses. Fish oil capsules are sold over-the-counter or by prescription (*Lovaza*).

Are there side effects or drug interactions with omega-3 fatty acids?

Fish oil can cause nausea, heartburn, or loose stool. It can have a fishy aftertaste. Some patients have found that refrigerating or freezing fish oil supplement capsules might help. (Prescription *Lovaza* should NOT be frozen.) Discard capsules with a very strong or spoiled taste. There is a small increased risk of bleeding or bruising when taking fish oil at doses greater than 3 grams daily.

Who should not take omega-3 fatty acid supplements?

High doses of alpha-linolenic acid may increase the risk of prostate cancer, so supplements should be avoided in men with prostate cancer or at risk of prostate cancer.

How do I choose a fish oil product?

Over-the-counter fish oil is considered a supplement, not a drug, so quality and content varies.

Choose products with the "USP Verified Mark" on the label. These have been tested, and have acceptable levels of mercury, other heavy metals, PCBs, and dioxins. They are confirmed to contain what the label says they contain. The omega-3 content is the labeled amount of DHA plus EPA.

Dosing:

Dose for Heart Health – 850/882 (EPA/DHA)

Dose for Triglyceride reduction – 4 Grams (EPA/DHA)

Sources: (according to strength)

Twin Lab (liquid)	\$14.00/12 ounces
Lovaza- prescription only	Cost depends on insurance coverage
GNC triple strength fish oil	\$17.99/60 capsules
GNC Nordic Naturals Ultimate	\$48.95/120 capsules
Iceland Health (Walgreen's)	\$19.99/30 capsules

Pricing obtained 9/08.