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Heart-Healthy Eating: Omega-3 Fatty Acids



What Are the Benefits of Omega-3 Fatty Acids?

Eating fats that provide omega-3 fatty acids may reduce risk of heart disease.

There are three types of omega-3 fatty acids:

- **Alpha linolenic acid:** This is in some vegetable oils, nuts, seeds, and soy foods.
- **EPA and DHA:** These are both found in fatty fish (salmon, tuna, mackerel, and sardines). EPA and DHA are also known as “long-chain omega-3 fatty acids.” They seem to provide the most benefit for the heart.

Tips for Adding Omega-3 Fatty Acids to Your Meal Plan

- Select oils that provide omega-3 fat, such as canola oil or soybean oil.
- Add flaxseed oil, which is very high in omega-3 fat, to foods. If you use flaxseed, be sure it is ground up. Your body cannot digest the beneficial fat if the seeds are left whole.
- Enjoy walnuts. The walnut is the only common nut with alpha linolenic acid. Try walnut oil in salad dressings.
- Have two 4-ounce portions of fatty fish weekly. Enjoy salmon, albacore tuna, mackerel, or sardines.
- Try new ways to cook fish. Remember that fish cooks quickly. Try poaching it in an orange juice and herb mixture. Or bake fish with vegetables wrapped in foil.
- Read the labels on egg cartons and choose eggs that are high in omega-3 fatty acids. These eggs have more omega-3 fats than regular eggs because of the type of feed given to the chickens that lay them. Remember, however, that all egg yolks contain cholesterol.

Fish Oil Supplements

If you wish to take fish oil supplements, the American Heart Association recommends that people with heart disease get 1 gram of omega-3 fatty acids from a combination of EPA and DHA per day.

Notes: