

Delta Gamma Well Aware

Encompasses eight dimensions: Social, Spiritual, Physical, Emotional, Vocational, Intellectual, Financial and Leadership Development



Omega-3 Fatty Acids



The Basics

- Omega-3 fatty acids are important polyunsaturated fats and are called “essential” because we must get them from our diet and can not make them on our own.
- Omega-3s tend to decrease both inflammation and blood clotting and researchers are still discovering all of the things omega-3 fatty acids can do to help improve health.
- Scientific research suggests that diets richer in omega-3s than most Americans get are necessary. The typical American diet consists of about 20 times as much omega-6 fatty acid as omega-3 fatty acid and although both are "healthy" polyunsaturated fats, they play very different roles. Scientists believe we would benefit from a ratio of omega-6 to omega-3 that was closer to 2 to 1 instead of 20 to 1.

Your Health

Diets with a better ratio of omega-3 fatty acids appear to have numerous benefits, including fewer risks related to:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Arthritis
- Autoimmune diseases
- Diabetes

A recent study also suggest that more omega-3s may be associated with lower levels of depression and stress

- In this study researchers teamed up to examine 43 middle-aged to elderly adults, about half of whom were caring for relatives with Alzheimer's disease or other type of dementia.
- They found that participants with much higher levels of omega-6 than omega-3 fatty acids in blood samples also reported more symptoms of depression.

People consume omega-6 fatty acids all the time; they are abundant in many oils, such as sunflower, corn, soybean and peanut oil. You only need the equivalent of about one tablespoon of oil rich in omega-6 fatty acids each day to get what you need -- easily consumed in the form of:

- Salad dressing
- Mayonnaise

- Margarine
- Baked goods
- Eggs

Omega-3 fatty acids are less abundant and while some types of oils, such as canola and soybean, contain a small but significant amount of omega-3s, others have much less. A great source of omega-3s is fatty fish, such as:

- salmon
- halibut
- herring
- lake trout
- bluefish
- tuna
- Atlantic mackerel

Other good sources include flaxseed and walnuts. Fish oil supplements are very popular but generally are not recommended unless you are under the care of a doctor.

Remember, foods rich in omega-3s also tend to be good sources of lean protein, fiber or other healthful ingredients.

Added Benefits

There are many ways to work omega-3s into your diet and enjoy their healthful benefits.

Fight Aches and Pains

- In a recent study, nearly 2/3 of patients suffering from chronic neck and back pain stopped needing anti-inflammatory pain pills after taking fish-oil pills for 20 to 30 days. The key may be omega-3s ability to fight inflammation.
- Doctors say that you do not need to take the fish-oil supplements, simply get enough natural omega-3 fatty acid through your diet. Try eating cold-water ocean fish and lake trout.

Staying Slim

- Omega-3s may help stabilize moods, helping to control those mood swings that lead to emotional overeating.

Happy Days

- Another form of omega-3s, known as DHA, makes up 25 percent of your body's brain fat and also manages the production and flow of the feel-good chemical serotonin.
- Studies suggest that people battling depression seem to be DHA deficient.

Breathe Better

- Omega-3s may help to reduce the inflammation associated with asthma.

Wellness Resources

Health, October 2006

The Ohio State University *NetWellness*

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