

Omega-3 Fats

WHAT ARE OMEGA-3 FATS?

♥ Fatty acids that are essential for human health and must be obtained from food

Alpha-linolenic acid (ALA)
Eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA)
Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)

♥ These fats are helpful in conditions such as heart disease, allergies, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and reduce inflammation

♥ Select foods naturally rich in omega -3 fats to meet needs – take a look at the table below for good sources

♥ Fish oil capsules should ONLY be used in children under the direction of a physician

♥ AVOID supplementation of more than 3 g of omega 3's – this can lead to potential side



Good Sources of Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Vegetables

Leeks
Spinach
Cauliflower
Broccoli
Leafy greens

Oil

Canola

Fish

Salmon
Anchovies
Sardines
Herring
Tuna
Whitefish
Halibut
Bluefish

Grain

Flaxseed- oil/ground
Oat germ
Wheat germ
Barilla Plus® pasta

Nuts

(for children > 4 yrs)

Walnuts
Butternuts
Brazil nuts
Pine nuts

Other:

Eggs
Smart Balance® Brand
- margarine
- mayonnaise
- oil
- peanut butter
- Silk Plus ® soy milk

INFANTS

- ♥ Important for brain & eye development and cardiovascular health
- ♥ Omega-3's are naturally found in breast milk (depends on maternal intake) and infant formulas are supplemented
- ♥ Infant rice cereal, oatmeal, and oatmeal with bananas are available with added DHA
- ♥ A variety of 2nd foods (infant strained foods) are available with added DHA
- ♥ Infants cannot produce omega-3's efficiently so they must be obtained through the diet
 - Recommended intake for infants = 500 mg per day

GROUND FLAX SEED

- ♥ Ground is the least expensive form (\$2/lb)
- ♥ Can be purchased in bulk section of a natural food store/large grocery store
- ♥ Ground (use a grinder) flax seeds turn rancid quickly - Store in refrigerator/freezer
- ♥ Contains highest percentage of plant derived omega-3 (58%)
- ♥ 1 tbsp ground flax & 3 tbsp water may serve as a replacement for 1 egg in baking
- ♥ Can be mixed with oatmeal, yogurt, or any other nutty-flavored food item

CHILDREN/TEENS

- ♥ From birth through early childhood the **brain and eyes** grow significantly and have high requirements for omega-3 fatty acids. A healthy intake of omega-3 fats are needed throughout life.
- ♥ Recommended intakes (based on DRI):

Children 1-3 years = 700 mg	4-8 years = 900 mg
Girls 9-13 years = 1000 mg	14 and up = 1100 mg
Boys 9-13 years = 1200 mg	14 and up = 1600 mg
- ♥ Children should limit consumption to no more than 6 oz of canned tuna per week and no more than 12 oz of most other fish in order to minimize the risk from mercury
- ♥ Fatty fish such as salmon, herring, and to a lesser extent, tuna, contain the most omega-3 fatty acids
- ♥ Mercury contamination is greatest in large, predatory fish such as shark, tilefish, swordfish, and king mackerel – avoid eating these fish

Websites to visit for more information:

University of Maryland Medical Center

<http://www.umm.edu/altmed/articles/omega-3-000316.htm>

American Academy of Family Physicians

<http://www.aafp.org/afp/20040701/133.pdf>

Kansas State University

<http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/fntr2/mf2519.pdf>

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/omega-3/HB00087>