

Omega-3 fatty acids

Information for patients and families

What are omega-3 fatty acids?

Omega-3 fatty acids are a type of polyunsaturated fat. They have been shown to reduce triglycerides, blood pressure and the risk of heart disease. There are 3 main kinds of Omega-3 fatty acids:

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

What foods contain omega-3 fatty acids?

- ALA is found in many plant-based foods including nuts, seeds, oils and margarines. As well, many foods have ALA added to them.
- EPA and DHA are found mainly in oily fish and fish oil supplements.

What type and amount of omega-3 fatty acids do I need?

ALA
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1.6 grams per day for men or 1.1 grams per day for women
EPA and DHA
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you have heart disease, we recommend you take: 1 gram per day of EPA and DHA from fish or omega 3 supplements.• To prevent heart disease, eat 2 servings (8 ounces total) of fatty fish per week. If you use a supplement, look for a dose of about 0.5 grams of EPA and DHA per day.

Plant sources of omega-3 fatty acids

Food item	Serving size	ALA content (g)
Flaxseed oil	1 Tablespoon (Tbsp)	7.9 - 8.5
Walnut oil	1 Tbsp.	1.4
Canola oil	1 Tbsp.	1.3
Soybean oil	1 Tbsp.	0.9
Margarine, omega 3 fortified	1 Tbsp.	1.1
Margarine, non-hydrogenated soy/canola	1 Tbsp.	0.6 – 0.9
Salba	2 Tbsp.	3.05
Ground flaxseed	1 Tbsp.	2.46
Walnuts	1 Tbsp.	0.7-0.9
Omega-3 bagels & bread	½ bagel or 1 slice	0.9 - 2
Cooked soybeans	½ cup	0.54
Omega-3 eggs	1 egg	0.4
Omega-3 margarine	1 teaspoon	0.34
Omega-bar (fruit & fibre energy bar)	1 bar	3.2

Fish Sources of Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Type of fish	Choose	Serving size	EPA+DHA (g)
Salmon	Wild – Atlantic or Alaska	3.5 oz (100 g) cooked	1.84
	Canned – pink or sockeye		1.23
Atlantic Herring	From Canada or U.S.		2.01
Sardines	Any type, with bone		0.98-1.35
Mackerel	Atlantic		1.20
Halibut	Pacific (Alaskan)		0.47-0.58
Trout	Any type		0.27-0.32
Fish oil supplement*		1 capsule	1

*Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before taking a fish oil supplement. It is not safe for everyone.

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