

Omega 3 and Omega 6 Fatty Acids

The Terms “Omega 3” and “Omega 6” is “scientific slang” to refer to the structural composition of these specific fatty acids. All the health benefits of omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acids are not known however studies have repeatedly shown the benefits of omega 3 to the heart. Omega 3 and omega 6 fatty acids must come from the diet or supplements because they cannot be made by the body.

Most American diets provide more than 10 times as much omega-6 than omega-3 fatty acids. There is general agreement that individuals should consume more omega-3 and less omega-6 fatty acids to promote good health. If you have a diet that includes leafy green vegetables, nuts, and vegetable oils such as canola, fish and organ meats you're probably getting a good amount of Omega 3. However, if you are just not sure (and in cases of confirmed heart disease), a fish oil supplement can be taken – ask your doctor for your dosing. Omega 6 is found in many foods, including meat, vegetable oils (e.g., safflower, sunflower, corn, soy), and processed foods made with these oils.

According to both primary and secondary prevention studies, consumption of omega-3 fatty acids, as in fish and fish oil, reduces various cardiovascular disease outcomes such as sudden death, cardiac death, and myocardial infarction. The evidence is strongest for fish and fish oil supplements. Omega-3 fatty acids affect cellular functions involved in ensuring a normal heart rate and coronary blood flow.

Fish oils can lower blood triglyceride levels in a dose-dependent manner. Fish oils have a very small beneficial effect on blood pressure and possible beneficial effects on coronary artery restenosis after angioplasty and exercise capacity in people with coronary atherosclerosis.

Omega-3 fatty acids can also reduce joint tenderness and need for corticosteroid drugs in rheumatoid arthritis.

The quantity and strength of evidence is inadequate to conclude that omega-3 fatty acids protect cognitive function with aging or the incidence or clinical progression of dementia (including Alzheimer's disease), multiple sclerosis, and other neurological diseases.

Can you get too much omega 3? Adverse effects related to consumption of fish-oil or ALA (type of omega 3) supplements are generally minor and typically gastrointestinal in nature (such as diarrhea). They can usually be eliminated by reducing the dose or discontinuing the supplement. To be safe and easy on your kidneys and liver, its important to check with your doctor for dosing instructions with any supplement – more is not always better.

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Some information provided by:

http://dietary-supplements.info.nih.gov/Health_Information/Information_About_Individual_Dietary_Supplements.aspx