

## Omega-3 fatty acids (Fish oil)

### Why should I take omega-3 fatty acid supplements?

Omega-3 fatty acids (fish oil) have been proven in clinical studies to decrease the risk of repeat episodes of coronary heart disease and to reduce the chance of dying from coronary heart disease. They also decrease a component of cholesterol known as triglycerides.



### What are some different sources of omega-3 fatty acids?

Omega-3 fatty acids are found primarily in fish oil. They can be obtained either through eating different types of fish in certain quantities, such as those listed below, or through supplements found at any pharmacy. Omega-3 fatty acids are an over the counter product that must be purchased by the patient. Even though omega-3 fatty acids are not prescription medications, it is still important to keep taking them as directed to gain full health benefit. In addition, it is also important to continue taking any other medications prescribed by your physician.

#### Type of Fish

Anchovies, Herring, Mackerel, Salmon  
Albacore tuna, sablefish, sardines  
Bluefin tuna, trout  
Halibut, swordfish  
Fresh water bass, oysters  
Sea bass  
Shrimp, Pollock



#### Amount needed to obtain 1.5 g of omega-3 fatty acids (oz = ounces)

1 serving (3 oz)  
1 ¼ servings (3.75 oz)  
1 ½ servings (4.5 oz)  
2 servings (6 oz)  
2 ½ servings (7.5 oz)  
3 servings (9 oz)  
3 ½ servings (10.5 oz)

### How much omega-3 fatty acids do I need to take per day?

The amount of omega-3 fatty acids needed per day to reduce your risk of heard disease can be obtained by eating fish twice a week (above, note serving size) or by taking daily supplements containing 800-1000 mg (0.8-1 gram) of omega-3 fatty acids. If used to reduce triglycerides, higher doses are required and the amount should be determined by your physician and/or nutritionist.

## What omega-3 fatty acid (fish oil) supplement should I purchase?

When purchasing an over the counter product, it is important to carefully read the label and note the active ingredients. The strength of the product may read 1000 mg fish oil but may only have 300 mg of omega-3 fatty acids. The two active ingredients that make up omega 3 fatty acids are **EPA** (eicosapentanoic acid) and **DHA** (docosahexanoic acid). You should ask your physician, nutritionist, or pharmacist to help you determine how much omega-3 fatty acids are contained in a particular fish oil product. Examples of some products are listed below to help guide you in making your purchase.

Product Name	Amount of fish oil per capsule	Amount of omega-3 fatty acid per capsule	Capsules needed to fulfill daily requirement
Zone Perfect Omega 3	1000 mg	267 mg	3
Nature's Bounty EPA Natural Fish Oil	1000 mg	300 mg	3
Major Fish Oil Concentrate	1000 mg	300 mg	3
YourLife Natural Fish Oil	1000 mg	360 mg	3
Nature's Bounty Salmon Oil	1000 mg	400 mg	2
Trader Joe's Omega-3	-	500 mg	2
CVS Fish Oil Concentrate	-	600 mg	2

## Precautions/side effects to be aware of when consuming omega-3 fatty acids

Omega-3 fatty acids (fish oil) are generally well tolerated and have few side effects, especially when consumed with food. The most common side effect patients may experience is a mild fishy taste. Patients taking warfarin (Coumadin®), aspirin, low molecular heparins (e.g. Lovenox®), clopidogrel (Plavix®), or ticlopidine (Ticlid®) should consult with their physician before taking omega-3 supplements due to a slight increase in the risk of bleeding.

## Important information on storage of omega-3 fatty acids

- store in a cool dry place
- keep away from light
- keep away from children

## Other commonly used names for omega-3 fatty acids

- n-3 fatty acids
- fish oil
- eicosapentanoic acid (EPA)
- docosahexanoic acid (DHA)