

IN THE KNOW ABOUT NUTRITION

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Omega-3: The Basics

Omega-3 oil is good for your joints, skin, vision, brain, heart, helps lower bad cholesterol levels and even boosts fertility. It is an anti-ager and an anti-inflammatory nutrient. And there are studies showing that omega-3 fatty acids may help with other conditions, including rheumatoid arthritis, depression, and many more.

What is it?

There are 3 forms of Omega-3 oils:

- **Alph-linolenic acid (ALA)** found in English walnuts and vegetable oils like flaxseed, soybean and olive which the body eventually converts to DHA.
- **Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)** found primarily in **fish oil**, this is the ultimate form of fatty acid in humans. Most people get far too little of this all-important fatty acid. Getting a daily dose of DHA (600 to 10000 mg) from supplements is preferable to reap the health benefits. You have a choice of taking a fish oil supplement or one derived from algae or krill, a shrimp-like crustacean.
- **Eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA)** is also found in fish oil, so it is absorbed if you are taking a daily dose of DHA omega-3.

Where is it Found?

It is found naturally in a variety of delicious foods including walnuts, salmon, tuna, olive oil and avocados. High doses for Omega-3 are also found in flaxseed, sardines, soybeans, tofu, shrimp, brussels sprouts, cauliflower and winter squash.



***Caution:** Talk to your physician about taking this supplement. Omega-3 supplements (EPA/DHA) may cause the blood to thin and cause excess bleeding, particularly in people taking anticoagulant drugs.

Benefits of a Daily Dose of Omega-3

- **Lubricates joints:** Helps provide the lubrication joints need to function at an effective level. By keeping joints lubed, you experience less grinding and less overall wear and tear - and thereby - less pain as you age.
- **Decreases inflammation:** in inflamed joints.
- **Fights Wrinkles:** As we age, fat cells in our skin's third layer thin out and tend to get a bit bumpier; omega-3s help make that layer thicker and smoother. The effect? Wrinkles go away and skin becomes fuller.
- **Protects Vision:** Our eyes' retinas are a membranous structures and the whole eye is covered in a soft double layer of membranes, making your eyes' health dependent on the liver (who knew?). The liver helps metabolize fat-soluble vitamins that feed and maintain those membranes. If you are deficient in DHA, it affects how we see by delaying the system that converts light into neural energy in the retina.
- **Pumps the Heart:** Omega-3s reduce triglycerides, stabilize your heartbeat, make platelets "less sticky" and can even lower blood pressure. The EPA you get with your daily DHA dose helps prevent artery-blocking clots. Eating 1 ounce of nuts per day can decrease the incidence of heart disease between 20 and 60 percent.
- **Clears Cholesterol:** Boosts levels of HDL (the good cholesterol) and helps clear your arteries.
- **Boosts the Brain:** In keeping your arteries clear, you are immediately improving brain function. They also alter your neurotransmitters to help reduce depression.
- **Enhances Fertility:** Improves fertility rates in both males and females by improving sperm's swimming ability and the environment for implantation in women.

Source:

WebMD- <http://www.webmd.com/healthy-aging/omega-3-fatty-acids-fact-sheet>

University of Maryland Medical Center- <http://umm.edu/health/medical/altmed/supplement/omega3-fatty-acids>

The Dr. Oz Show- <http://www.doctoroz.com/videos/daily-dose-omega-3>

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