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Healthy Diet Essentials – Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Dr. Erika D. Nelson

Omega-3 supplements are the second most commonly used natural product by adults, following only multivitamin/mineral products.¹ If you are not already taking an omega-3 supplement, here are the reasons why you should start adding them to your healthy daily diet.

1. Omega-3s are essential to our diet. Just like vitamins and minerals, the human body must obtain omega-3 fatty acids through food. Alpha-linolenic acid (ALA) is an omega-3 found in flax seed, walnuts, canola, soy bean and dark green leaves. ALA can be converted in the body to the long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), but due to this being a rather inefficient process, it is often recommended that EPA and DHA be consumed directly from food sources such as fish or fish oil supplements.
2. Purified fish oil is a safe way to supplement the diet. Some large, cold-water fish that are high in EPA and DHA, such as salmon, may also have high amounts of pollutants (heavy metals, pesticides and industrial toxins). Therefore, it is important to look for fish oil products that have undergone rigorous purification steps to minimize these contaminants.
3. Omega-3s promote cardiovascular health and much more. Besides being important for promoting a healthy heart and cardiovascular system, EPA and DHA have been shown to provide benefits to brain health and development, regulate certain aspects of immune system function and contribute to increased longevity.

So how much omega-3 do you need to maintain optimal health? International experts suggest that adults should aim to achieve an average daily intake of at least 650 mg of EPA and DHA combined, with at least 220 mg of each.² Be proactive about your health, and join the growing population of U.S. consumers who understand the many health benefits that come from daily consumption of omega-3 fatty acids today.

1. P.M. Barnes, et al., CDC National Health Statistics Report #12. Complementary and Alternative Medicine Use Among Adults and Children: United States, 2007. December 2008.
2. A.P. Simopolous, et al., Workshop statement on the essentiality of and recommended dietary intakes for Omega-6 and Omega-3 fatty acids. Prostaglandins Leukot Essent Fatty Acids 2000;63:119–2.

Dr. Erika Nelson is a Senior Research Scientist at Mannatech

