

PROACTIVE NEWSLETTER

by Dr. Andrew Cohen
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The Health Benefits of Fish Oil Omega-3 Essential Fatty Acids

More and more research is coming out in favor of adding omega-3 fatty acids because the average American lacks this important piece of the diet. In the past I have targeted specific patients who I feel lack omega-3's (most commonly found in cold water fish and ground flax seeds) and suggested they supplement, but now I am suggesting everyone take omega-3 supplements and a *good* multivitamin (that will be a future newsletter). I offer a high quality supplement or you can shop around, but think about adding these two to your diet. The following is a great article written by Pure Encapsulations, which is a very high level supplement company - the one that I use personally and recommend for my patients.



Research has revealed the importance of fish oil omega-3 essential fatty acids (EPA/DHA). Numerous studies have indicated fish oils play an important role for many aspects of health, including:

CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH

Studies suggest that fish oil promotes healthy lipid and triglyceride metabolism, blood flow, vascular dilation and tone, platelet function, endothelial function, and erythrocyte membrane composition. Research also suggests the potential for fish oil to contribute to healthy homocysteine metabolism. Furthermore, fish oil may help to protect the cardiovascular system from the effects of occasional stress. In a recent meta-analysis of 11 trials involving over 15,000 subjects, fish oil was associated with providing overall cardiovascular benefit.*

JOINT FUNCTION

Fish oil acts in part by maintaining healthy prostaglandin, cytokine and leukotriene production, supporting connective tissue and cartilage integrity. It also plays a role in moderating neutrophil activity, supporting joint comfort. Numerous small double blind trials indicate that the omega-3 fatty acids in fish oil promote joint motility and joint comfort. Another double blind, placebo-controlled, prospective study revealed that fish oil modulates immune mediator activity as well as provides support for joint flexibility.*

COGNITIVE/EMOTIONAL HEALTH (ADULTS)

Omega-3 fatty acids are important components of neuronal cell membranes and are essential to cognitive function. By supporting vascular health, fish oils promote oxygen and nutrient delivery to the brain. Studies suggest that healthy red blood cell membrane omega-3 fatty acid concentration is associated with emotional well-being. Both epidemiological and double blind placebo-controlled trials indicate that fish oil supports positive mood. Furthermore, dietary intake of omega-3 fatty acids in adults has been associated with maintaining healthy EPA/DHA serum levels as well as a healthy EPA to arachidonic acid ratio, providing potential support for mental function.*

COGNITIVE/VISUAL DEVELOPMENT (CHILDREN)

Fish oil promotes healthy mental function and maturation of the central nervous system, including support for cell health and neurotransmission. Essential fatty acids are also vital constituents of the retina, helping to support healthy visual function. EPA and DHA consumption by breast fed infants and children born to mothers who supplement with fish oils has demonstrated support for visual acuity and cognitive development. A longitudinal study suggests that infants born to mothers with higher DHA status demonstrated healthy cognitive capacity at 12 and 18 months. A randomized double blind study suggested that 4 year olds born to mothers who had taken fish oil had healthy cognitive function. Another study suggested that fish oil supplementation may enhance healthy night vision in children. Several studies have also revealed a relationship between dietary omega-3 fatty acids, healthy brain function and sleep patterns.*

RESPIRATORY FUNCTION

Fish oil has demonstrated the potential to support bronchial smooth muscle function by moderating leukotriene and interleukin production. Double blind randomized studies indicate that fish oil supplementation may promote healthy respiratory function in children and adults. Another randomized controlled trial involving 10 elite athletes suggests that fish oil supplementation encourages healthy post-exercise pulmonary function.*

IMMUNE RESPONSE

Essential fatty acids appear to exert a beneficial effect on the immune response by maintaining healthy cytokine activity at the level of gene expression.*

GASTROINTESTINAL HEALTH

Fish oil supplementation has been associated with a soothing effect for the gastrointestinal (GI) tract. In a double blind, placebo-controlled crossover trial, subjects experienced positive support for GI comfort. A separate 6 month trial revealed that fish oil supplementation maintained healthy leukotriene production and immune cell activity in the colon.*

SKIN HEALTH

Fish oils promote vascular health, supporting oxygen and nutrient delivery to the skin. Studies have shown that omega-3 fatty acids protect keratinocytes and fibroblasts from free radicals and immune mediators generated by sun exposure, helping to soothe the skin. Additionally, they help promote elasticity and hydration for smoother looking skin.*

As you can see there are multiple reasons to begin taking an Omega-3 fatty acid. Please talk to me about this if you are interested.

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For educational purposes only. Consult your physician for any health problems.

*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food & Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

Remember to stay ProActive and Take Control of Your Health!



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