

**Health and Wellness:**  
**Health Benefits of Omega-3s**

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Knowing how to eat well requires knowledge. This article clarifies the health benefits of omega-3s, the flaxseed/flaxseed oil alternative and explains omega-6s. Everyone's health can benefit no matter what age.

**Omega-3s** – Extraordinary health is supported by omega-3s which support the eyes, heart, brain, blood vessels and nervous system and also maintain cellular, immune and joint health. As if that were not enough, it also helps to maintain healthy blood pressure and blood sugar levels. However, our bodies cannot make omega-3s or any other fatty acids. Making informed decisions in your diet is therefore essential. Two of the three major types of omega-3 fatty acids (abbreviated DHA and EPA) are contained in grassfed beef and fish such as salmon, sardines, tuna, herring and anchovies which are all coldwater fish and should only be consumed if wild. Steer clear of farm raised fish which are not as clean as wild, can be genetically modified and contain more omega-6s. (See explanation of omega-6s below.) The other major type of omega-3 (abbreviated ALA) can be found in flax, flaxseed oil, chia seeds, chia seed oil, perillo seeds, pumpkin seeds and walnuts. Eating as little as four ounces of wild salmon provides about 87% of the current daily value of omega-3 fatty acids. The American Health Association recommends eating one to two servings of fish high in omega-3 per week.

**Additional Omega-3s Benefits** – Clinical trials have shown that fish oil supplementation is effective in the treatment of many disorders including rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, ulcerative colitis and Raynaud's disease. For adults, the benefits of omega-3s continue. Specifically, omega-3s improve mood, memory, recall, reasoning and focus. It also supports the health of the aging brain. Some researchers even conclude that omega-3s lower the risk of Alzheimer's. Other researchers found that omega-3 supplements lessen the symptoms of depression, bipolar disorder and psychosis.

**Mercury** – Low-mercury canned tuna (which is also sustainably caught and contains as much as six times omega-3) can be purchased at a premium price at Whole Foods and other health food stores. Be forewarned that since high levels of mercury cause numerous health problems, it is best to seek healthy alternatives.

**Omega-3 Supplement** – For those who want to avoid consuming fish either because of a vegetarian diet or to avoid possible health concerns such as heavy metal and other contaminants but still want to be able to realize omega-3 health benefits, fish oil supplements provide a practical alternative fittingly called Omega-3.

**Flaxseed and Flaxseed Oil** – When fish is not an option, flax is the seed of choice due to its high quality and non-animal source for omega-3s. Flax also is an excellent source of the third major type of omega-3 fatty acids (abbreviated ALA) which is used for cellular energy production. While flaxseed is by and large free or vastly low in contaminants, it also is an excellent source of protein, antioxidants, vitamins B1, B2, C and E, zinc, magnesium, the phytonutrient lignin and digestion-supporting fiber. Ground flaxseed is easily added to fruit or vegetable smoothies. Two tablespoons of flaxseeds provide an ample serving of omega-3 fatty acids in the form of ALA.

**Omega-6s** – Supporting skin and cholesterol health, omega-6s also promote inflammation and help the blood to be "sticky" so it can clot. Omega-6s are present in vegetable oils, poultry and cereals. The average diet is already high enough in omega-6s so no supplement is typically required. Our ancestors developed from a diet with a 1:1 ratio of omega-3 and omega-6. Presently though, omega-6s naturally outnumber omega-3s in most people's diet by an approximate ratio of 20:1. Because omega-3s and omega-6s interact together which effects the production of hormone-like messengers called eicosanoids, this interaction directly influences body functions at the cellular level as well as inflammation.

In summary, the health benefits of omega-3s cannot afford to be ignored because of their lifelong benefits. From the cradle (and even earlier) to golden years, omega-3s help to keep us vibrantly healthy, strong and sharp! Because fish oil supplementation lowers blood concentrations of vitamin E, it is a good idea to take extra vitamin E when adding fish oils to your diet. The US Department of Agriculture conducted a clinical trial and found that taking 200 mg/day of synthetic vitamin E is sufficient to completely counteract this effect. Consult with a nutritionally informed physician to ensure that you and your family members are consuming enough omega-3s from any of the above-mentioned sources to improve your health.

Following are some of the websites used for this article:

- 1) <http://lowcarbdiets.about.com/od/whattoeat/a/flaxinfo.htm>
- 2) <http://www.totalhealthmagazine.com/Article/theextraordinary.html>
- 3) [http://www.mercola.com/beef/omega3\\_oil.htm](http://www.mercola.com/beef/omega3_oil.htm)