

Title: Fish Oil

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Abstract: Fish oil is obtained in the human diet by eating oily fish such as salmon, herring, trout, mackerel, albacore tuna, and sardines, or by consuming fish oil supplements. Contrary to popular belief, fish do not naturally produce these oils; instead, they acquire them through the ocean food chain when they consume algae, the original sources of the omega-3 fatty acids found in fish oils. Evidence from several studies suggests that omega-3 fatty acids from fish or fish oil supplements have positive effects on heart health, mental health, and infant development. It may even reduce the risk of some types of cancer. While fish oil has few reported side effects, it is important to talk to your doctor before starting fish oil supplements.

This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Primary Care Clerkship at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up to date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.

For more information about fish oil, please visit the following websites:

<http://www.medlineplus.com>

<http://www.americanheart.org>

<http://www.webmd.com>

<http://www.aafp.org>



Resources:

1. Riediger et al. 2009. A Systemic Review of the Roles of n-3 Fatty Acids in Health and Disease. Journal of the American Dietetic Association. 109: 668-679.
2. Lavie et al. 2009. Omega-3 Polyunsaturated Fatty Acids and Cardiovascular Disease. Journal of the American College of Cardiology. 54: 585-594.
3. <http://www.mayoclinic.com>
4. <http://www.emedicine.com>
5. <http://www.medlineplus.com>

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Fish Oil

(Omega-3 Fatty Acids)

What is fish oil?

Fish oil is obtained in the human diet by eating oily fish such as salmon, herring, trout, mackerel, albacore tuna, and sardines, or by consuming fish oil supplements. Contrary to popular belief, fish do not naturally produce these oils; instead, they acquire them through the ocean food chain when they consume algae, the original sources of the omega-3 fatty acids found in fish oils.



<http://altmed.creighton.edu/>



<http://healthheroes.wordpress.com/>

What are the benefits?

Evidence from several studies suggests that omega-3 fatty acids from fish or fish oil supplements have the following benefits:

- Reduces risk of heart disease
- Lowers cholesterol
- Slows build-up of plaque in the arteries
- Reduces risk of stroke
- Lowers blood pressure
- Helps regulate heart rhythm
- Useful in treatment after heart attack
- Reduces risk of death in patients with heart failure
- Reduces symptoms of depression
- Decreases the perception of daily stresses
- Decreases suicidal thoughts
- Improves memory
- Aids in infant development
- May reduce risk of breast cancer and colorectal cancer

Are there any side effects?

There are few reported side effects of fish oil. These include increased risk of bleeding, upset stomach, diarrhea, heartburn, and fishy aftertaste. It is important that you talk to your doctor before starting fish oil.

How much does it cost?

Fish oil may be purchased at retail stores and drug stores without a prescription. Generic brands cost around \$5.00 per bottle (or around \$0.25 per day), and name brands may cost up to \$50.00 per bottle (up to \$3.33 per day).