

# Omega-3 Fats

## Not all omega-3 fats are created equal

Omega-3 fats are polyunsaturated fats. Three important omega-3 fats are:

- Alpha-linolenic acid (ALA)
- Eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA)
- Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)

ALA is an essential nutrient that you must obtain from your diet because your body cannot produce it.

EPA and DHA are not essential nutrients because your body can produce them from ALA. But the rate at which your body can change ALA to EPA and DHA is very small. In fact, the rate is so low that you must include sources of EPA and DHA in your diet.

## EPA and DHA are heart healthy

Although all omega-3 fats are healthy fats. It is EPA and DHA that may reduce your risk of heart disease.<sup>3</sup>

## Sources

Sources of ALA include:

- Canola oil
- Flax oil and ground flax seed
- Soybean oil
- Walnuts
- Green leafy vegetables



The major source of EPA and DHA is fish oil, found in fatty fish such as:

- Salmon
- Herring
- Mackerel
- Trout



## Getting enough

Women need 1.1 grams of omega-3 fat per day while men need 1.6 grams per day. EPA + DHA should provide 0.65 grams of this total each day, while the rest should come from other sources such as ALA.

Follow these tips to increase your intake of ALA:

- Use canola oil in baking and cooking
- Make your own salad dressing using flax oil
- Add ground flax seeds when baking cookies and muffins
- Sprinkle 1/4 cup of walnuts on your cereal

To get enough EPA and DHA in your diet:

- Eat 85 grams (3 ounces) of fatty fish 2 to 3 times per week

**OR**

- Take a fish oil supplement that contains 0.65 grams of EPA + DHA per daily dose

## Omega-3 fats added to foods

Many food products contain added omega-3 fats. Because it is hard to disguise the taste of fish in these foods, the source of omega-3 fat is often flax oil rather than fish oil.

That means these foods may help you reach the amount of ALA you need each day but may not contain any EPA or DHA. Check the label to find out how much omega-3 fat comes from EPA and DHA.



## Recipes

Would you like to eat more fish, but need ideas for tasty recipes? Try these easy recipes to waken your taste buds and help you get enough EPA and DHA in your diet. There are also some ideas for adding ALA to your diet.

### Glazed Salmon

3oz salmon fillet  
2 tbsp Hoisin sauce

Preheat oven to 400°F. Place salmon fillet on baking sheet. Drizzle with hoisin sauce. Bake for 15 minutes or until fish flakes. Makes 1 serving.

Use leftover salmon on top of a mixed garden salad.

Nutrient analysis (per serving): 246 Kcal, 11.6g fat, 19.8g protein, 14.1g carbohydrates, 8.7g sugar

### Bruschetta Topped Halibut

3 ounce halibut steak or fillet  
1/2 cup bruschetta (8 tbsp)

Preheat oven to 400°. Place halibut on baking sheet and top with bruschetta. Place in oven for 15 minutes or until fish flakes. Makes 1 serving.

Bruschetta can be purchased premade at most grocery stores.

Nutrient analysis (per serving): 259 Kcal, 14.5g fat, 22.7g protein, 419mg sodium, 0g carbohydrates

### Cumin Crusted Sea Bass

3 ounce sea bass fillet/steak  
1 tbsp ground cumin  
1 tbsp of olive oil

Sprinkle fish with cumin. Heat a skillet on medium heat and add olive oil. Place fillet in the pan and cook evenly on both sides until fish flakes, approximately 15 minutes. Makes 1 serving.

Nutrient analysis (per serving): 225 Kcal, 15.7g fat, 20g protein, 74mg sodium

### Flax Cookies

Preheat oven to 350°F. In a large bowl mix and beat:

1 cup buttermilk  
1/2 cup applesauce  
1/2 cup canola oil  
2 eggs or 4 egg whites  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
1 cup brown sugar  
1/2 cup granulated sugar  
1/2 tsp salt  
1 tsp baking soda  
1 tsp cinnamon

Add:

1 cup raisins  
1 cup chocolate chips  
1 1/2 cups all purpose flour  
1 cup ground flax seed  
3 cups quick oats

Mix well. If necessary, gradually add more buttermilk or water to get a flowing dough. Drop by tablespoon on cookie sheet and bake 15 – 18 minutes. Makes 110 cookies.

Nutrient analysis (per cookie): 57 Kcal, 2.1g fat, 30mg sodium, 8.8g carbohydrates, 0.8g fibre, 1.2g protein

### Flax Salad Dressing

Shake or whisk together:

3 tbsp of flax oil  
1 tbsp of lemon juice  
1 clove of garlic, minced  
Pepper to taste

Makes 4 servings.

Nutrient analysis (per serving): 92 Kcal, 10.5g fat, 4mg sodium