



In this issue:

- What's all the Hype about Omega – 3s
- Cardiovascular Health for Heart & Stroke Prevention Month
- Flu Prevention & Treatment Update
- Salmon with Asian Marinade

What's the Hype about Omega-3s?

You may have heard that it is good to supplement with omega-3 fatty acids, but why? Omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids are essential fatty acids (EFAs). That means our body does not make these fatty acids on its own; therefore they must be obtained through diet or supplementation on a daily basis. These polyunsaturated fatty acids help regulate our inflammatory response, improve heart function, benefit the immune system, are important for eye and nerve development, and for breast, brain and joint health.



Some Facts about Omega-3

- Ideal ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 is 1:2
- The Standard American Diet (SAD) prevents optimal consumption, in fact North Americans consume anywhere from 1:10 to 1:25
- The average person consumes less than 15% of their daily omega-3 requirement
- Omega-3 deficiency is associated with many health risks
- Sardines, Mackerel, Albacore, Salmon and Herring (SMASH) are the best sources of omega-3 fatty acids

Omega-3 from Fish or Flax?

Omega-3s fall into two categories: those derived from plants (alpha-linolenic acids) and those derived from marine sources (EPA & DHA discussed below).

Alpha-Linolenic acid (ALA) is a minor component of tissues. It is found in some vegetable oils (flax, soy, and canola) as well as leafy vegetables.

Human conversion of ALA to EPA and DHA is slow and can be inhibited by various conditions, such as a diet high in omega-6 fatty acids, saturated and trans fatty acids, as well as alcohol intake. Vitamin and mineral deficiencies can also inhibit this conversion. Most research on Omega-3 fatty acids has been done on fish oil.

You do not get enough omega-3 from flax seeds alone

Reading the Label on your Fish Oil Supplement

Eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) protects the heart and blood vessels, decreases triglycerides, as well as has anti-inflammatory effects. It is particularly effective in rheumatoid arthritis and for relief of allergic symptoms. It is found in fish and shellfish, as well as marine algae.

Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) is a major component of membranes in the eye, brain and reproductive organs. It is essential for fetal and infant brain & eye development. People suffering from depression have low levels of DHA. It is also found in fish and shellfish.

Gamma-Linolenic Acid (GLA) is an omega-6 fatty acid, but it is often added to fish oil products. It is important for healthy skin, hair and proper balance of hormones. It promotes anti-inflammatory prostaglandins and has a beneficial effect on our mood. It is found in evening primrose, borage, and black currant seed oils.

Choosing a Fish Oil

When choosing a fish oil supplement, it is important to go for quality. Cheaper fish oils often mean lower quality, which means the presence of heavy metals and rancid oils. The product you choose should be:

- A high quality supplement from a reputable manufacturer
- Third party tested to ensure the absence of PCBs and heavy metals
- Contain an antioxidant to ensure freshness

Reputable manufacturers do not use endangered species or harvest from over-fished areas.

Tips

- **Refrigerate your oil to maintain its freshness**
- **To decrease "repeating", freeze your fish oil capsules**
- **Finish a bottle within 6 weeks of opening**
- **Caution: People on blood-thinners should not take fish or flax oil**

So, What is my Optimal Dose?

- Women should consume at least 1100 mg of omega-3 fatty acids per day
- Men should consume at least 1500 mg of omega-3 fatty acids per day
- According to the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), up to 3000 mg per day is recognized as safe

Naturopathic Perspectives
Dr. Caralei Peters, ND
Dr. Laura Grant, ND

To book an appt, contact:
202-10 George Street
Hamilton, ON L8P 1C8
Tel: 905.528.1661
Fax: 905.528.1991



February is Heart and Stroke Prevention Month

Cardiovascular disease is the second most common cause of death in Canada (second to cancer). Several conditions contribute to cardiovascular disease, namely, hypertension (high blood pressure), atherosclerosis (clogged arteries), and obesity.

Hypertension is defined as 3 consecutive blood pressure readings of 140/90 or higher, from the same arm, and under similar conditions.

Atherosclerosis is due to fat streaking the arteries preventing proper blood flow. The fat streak is made of cholesterol and saturated fats from our diet. Inflammation of the streak hardens the fat, thus making its removal difficult. If a fatty streak is located in an artery serving the heart and becomes large enough to block the artery, a heart attack will occur.

Weight gain is a growing issue in North America. It often involves the excess intake of fats and lack of exercise. Obesity is often accompanied by fatty deposits accumulating around the heart (and other organs), decreasing the heart's ability to pump properly.

Points about Cholesterol

Cholesterol is an important molecule as it contributes to the synthesis of hormones and allows for optimal cell to cell communication. There are different types of cholesterol and each has its own functions.

High Density Lipoprotein (HDL), also known as the "good cholesterol", helps reabsorb the fat from our arterial walls.

Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL), also known as the "bad cholesterol", streaks the blood vessel walls, thus contributing to atherosclerosis.

Triglycerides themselves are not cholesterol, however the liver breaks them down to form LDL and total cholesterol.

Please note that the cholesterol that we eat does not directly streak our arteries, but contributes to our body's total cholesterol pool.

The Difference between Cholesterol and Omega-3 Fatty Acids

- Cholesterol is a saturated fat, whereas Omega-3s are unsaturated fatty acids
- Unsaturated fats allow for more fluidity within the cell membranes; i.e., saturated fats cause membrane stiffness
- Proper intake of Omega-3s is necessary to balance the dietary intake of saturated fats
- Omega-3s prevent the inflammation of fatty streaks, thus reducing cardiovascular complications
- Omega-3s help to increase HDL levels and decrease LDL levels, making for a healthier ratio

Flu Prevention & Treatment Update

Recent review of current research found that the flu vaccination was:

- Only 15% effective in preventing flu in the general population
- Reduced the duration of the flu by just 0.16 days (3.8 hours)!

Two studies published in Lancet showed that flu vaccines were:

- Only modestly effective in people in long-term care facilities
- Even less effective for elderly people living in the community

Your Naturopathic Doctor has better ways of preventing & treating the flu

- Boost your immune system with herbs, nutrition & hydrotherapy

But, if you missed your chance, or already have the flu...

- See your Naturopathic Doctor for individualized flu treatment and homeopathic remedies

How can my Food Choices make a Difference?

Most Canadians eat the Standard American Diet (SAD). Unfortunately this is high in saturated fats (meat and animal products), low in fibre, low in fruit and vegetables, and highly processed. The National Institute of Health (NIH) and your naturopathic doctor recommend a more wholesome diet, known as the DASH approach (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension). This means daily consumption of fruits, vegetables, low fat or nonfat dairy products, and includes lean meats, fish and poultry, grains, nuts and beans. The DASH approach will lower cholesterol and support healthy weight loss.

Naturopathic Approaches to lowering Cholesterol

- Eat Garlic! Your neighbours may not like it but your arteries will. ½ - 1 clove of fresh garlic crushed into food after cooking will lower cholesterol and decrease the risk of clots.
- Eat Fibre. This will bind dietary fat and reduce fat absorption. It also supports a healthy colon.
- Reduce Stress. Try yoga or Tai Chi. These will lower your blood pressure and stress level.
- Exercise. Just 20 minutes 4 times a week (take a walk, take the stairs) will benefit your heart.
- Add spice to your life! Sprinkle spices on your food instead of salt for flavour.

Salmon with Asian Marinade

2 Tbsp roasted sesame oil
2 Tbsp lime juice
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 Tbsp soy sauce
2 Salmon fillets

Stir together first 4 ingredients. Pour over fish, ensuring even coverage. Steam or broil until salmon is tender and flaky. Retain marinade and serve over rice as a sauce.