

The friendliest fish

We know that fish is the best natural source of Omega-3s, but for some people, the smell of fish is enough to make them gag. This is where fish oil supplements step in. However, there is a huge variance in the quality of fish oil supplements available.

The golden rule with supplements is to stay away from the bargain bin varieties and take only supplements recommended by your healthcare practitioner.

Consider the points below to make sure you are taking a high-quality fish oil supplement:

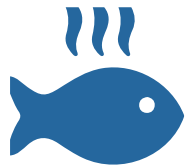
EPA/DHA Concentration

EPA and DHA are the fatty acids you need from your supplement, so check with your practitioner to make sure the supplements you are taking have a high concentration of these two fatty acids. Look for a concentration of 80% or higher.



Oxidation

Omega-3s are highly susceptible to damage, or oxidation, and an easy way to tell if your fish oil has become oxidised is its smell, it will smell fishy. A good quality fish oil supplement shouldn't smell, or taste, strongly of fish. If it does, it has become spoiled and is now ineffective.



Reflux

While those who are particularly prone to reflux can still suffer from reflux with a good quality fish oil, if you do not usually suffer from reflux, premium fish oil supplements shouldn't cause reflux.



Your next appointment is:



Did you know?

The World Health Organisation recommends eating 1-2 portions of fish a week to get enough Omega-3s in your diet.

If you're not a fan of fish, a good quality supplement could be the answer!

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Optimise your Omegas



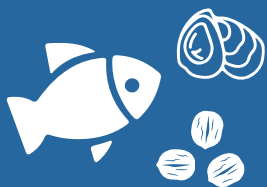
**Breaking down the
buzzword to help you
balance your Omegas**

Both Omega-3 and Omega-6 are polyunsaturated fatty acids and perform key biological functions in our bodies. Both are essential fatty acids which means your body cannot make them, they must be obtained through your diet.

Omega-3s and Omega-6s perform different functions in the body, and must be present in the correct ratio to ensure optimal functioning. This balance is important as Omega-3s are anti-inflammatory, whereas Omega-6s can become pro-inflammatory.

The recommended ratio of Omega-6 to Omega-3 is typically 4:1 or less, however, our modern diets mean that ratio is usually between 10:1 and 50:1.

Omega-3 vs Omega-6



Omega-3

Omega-3 fatty acids are composed of many fatty acid isomers, but the ones we are most interested in from a health point of view are EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid). They play an incredibly important role in the body, most notably, working to reduce inflammation and supporting brain health.



Omega-6

The primary isomer in Omega-6 fatty acids is LA (linoleic acid) and, while it can be converted to gamma linolenic acid which has anti-inflammatory properties, it can also be converted to arachidonic acid. Arachidonic acid is an essential component of cell membranes, but can also be responsible for producing inflammation.

Omega-3

There are many different types of fatty acid isomers in Omega-3, but we will focus on three main kinds.

1. ALA

ALA, or Alpha-linolenic acid is found in plants such as flaxseeds, canola, soy and walnuts. It must be converted to EPA or DHA before it can be used by the body. Unfortunately, this conversion process is inefficient in the human body, so while ALA is readily available, only a small percentage of the ALA we consume will convert to EPA or DHA. Any unconverted ALA will be used for energy.



2. EPA

EPA, or Eicosapentaenoic acid, forms signalling molecules called eicosanoids, which go on to form inflammation-resolving lipid mediators such as resolvins and protectins. Inflammation in the body is one of the key drivers of many chronic diseases. EPA is also known to improve many aspects of cardiovascular health.



3. DHA

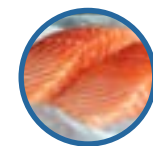
Both EPA and DHA, or Docosahexaenoic acid, are important structural components of the nervous system, the myelin sheath and cell membranes. Brain DHA levels are 250-300 times higher than EPA levels, and EPA levels are higher than DHA in other parts of the body like the blood and heart.



Omega-6

We already know that our diets tend to contain too much Omega-6. The main source of Omega-6 in our modern diet is in oils such as sunflower, sesame and canola, which are present in so many of the foods we regularly consume.

Sources of Omega-3



Fish - and some other select kinds of seafood, are the best natural source of Omega-3. Opt for fish such as mackerel, salmon or herring: these fish offer approximately 4,107mg, 4,023mg and 3,181mg of Omega-3s per serve. Sardines, anchovies and oysters (or caviar if you're feeling fancy) are also good sources of Omega-3.



Flaxseeds - One tablespoon of seeds contains approximately 2,338mg of Omega-3s, predominantly ALA. Flaxseeds are also very high in Omega-6 however, so won't improve the all-important ratio of Omega-6 to Omega-3.



Chia Seeds - Great things often come in small packages, and chia seeds are no exception, with 28g of chia seeds providing approximately 4,915mg of Omega-3. These do contain a small percentage of Omega-6.



Walnuts - About 7 walnuts (28g) provide around 2,542mg of Omega-3. Walnuts again are very high in Omega-6, so while they are a good source of Omega-3, they won't help to improve the ratio of Omega-6 to Omega-3.

Sources of Omega-6



Takeaway foods - Limit the amount of takeaway (especially fast food) you consume to reduce your intake of Omega-6 (and save money as a bonus).



Packaged sweets - Beyond containing added sugar, packaged sweets like biscuits and cakes usually contain high amounts of oil.



Pre-packaged snacks - Premade snacks, such as potato chips, muesli bars and cereals often have a high Omega-6 content.

Other food sources - Nuts, seeds, poultry and grains.