
Omega-3 Madness

Omega-3 fatty acids have been getting a lot of attention for their potential health benefits. You may have noticed food labels for a variety of products including eggs, ice cream and cereal are now boasting that they contain omega – 3’s. But are all of these products equally as effective in preventing or lessening our risk for health problems such as heart disease, cancer or eye health? The October 2007 issue of *Nutrition Action* (a health newsletter published monthly by the Center for Science in Public Interest, *CSPI*) discusses findings from the latest research on Omega-3’s and our health.

The Bottom Line

- Stick with fish or fish oil for best heart-health benefits (the long-chain omega-3 fats – DHA plus EPA). Many food products with omega-3 claims have only or mostly ALA (found in flax-seed and also in canola and soy), which “may not prevent anything,” according to CSPI nutritionist David Schardt.
- So far, there’s decent evidence that DHA and EPA (the Omega-3 fats in fish oil) can reduce your risk of a heart attack, but not your risk of cancer, memory loss, or macular degeneration. **One analysis of 13 studies found that compared to people who ate no fish, those who ate fish at least five times a week had a 40% lower risk for death from heart disease.**
- Eat fatty fish like salmon twice a week (try canned salmon instead of tuna in sandwiches). That would supply 500 to 1,000 mg a day of DHA plus EPA.
- If you’re a vegetarian, look for foods or supplements with DHA from algal oil
- If you have heart disease, follow the American Heart Association’s advice to take 1,000 mg a day of DHA plus EPA from fish oil.
- Taking more than 3,000- mg a day of DHA plus EPA may cause bleeding.



To read this piece in its entirety, go to <http://www.cspinet.org/new/200710011.html>
