

Guide on Omega-3 Fatty Acids and Best Food Sources for Better Health

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The very phrase omega 3 fatty acids remind me of that yellow pill that when bitten can taste absolutely awful! Yup, I tried that out when I was young and wondered what is it about this golden pill, which tastes so bad but is so good for your health? Cut to now as an adult and nothing has changed, although I have found out that swallowing the pill can do the trick as well, and I've learnt a whole lot of other facts and figures about omega 3 fatty acids.



Is it really a superfood which can be an answer to all your health problems? This is a pill that can prevent you from ever feeling fat or depressed. That's not all, it can also [protect against diseases like heart disease](#), arthritis, and osteoporosis. Gets you thinking, right? Is it the wonder pill that we should all keep in our medicine cabinet? Well, omega-3 fatty acids can indeed do all of that if not more, and all this you can get by not only popping in a pill, it can also be part of some of your healthiest foods too! Flaxseed and wild salmon anyone? Getting nutrients from foods should be your motto, especially if you want to stay sharp even when you are old!

Okay, so pill popping isn't really the solution thankfully. Start having real foods! You can get your dose of 1,100 milligrams of daily through foods. But from where should you get your share? And why should you have it? Here are some solid reasons for you to stock on your omega 3's.

Here is what you will find in this article,

- What are Omega 3 Fatty Acids?
- Omega 3 Essential Fatty Acids and the Difference between Omega-3 and Omega-6
- Omega 3 Fatty Acids Benefits- Why should you Stock on them?
- The Best Omega 3 Fatty Acids Foods for Optimal Health

What are Omega 3 Fatty Acids?

Omega-3 fatty acids health benefits undoubtedly have a positive impact on your body. Though fats have been abhorred and feared down the ages, it is really important for the body to carry out various vital functions. Many nutrients are fat soluble, so you need fats to synthesize the nutrients and the body to absorb the nutrients. You can get your daily dose of essential fatty acids through your diet.



The polyunsaturated fatty acids or (PUFA) can be broadly divided into three main – DHA, EPA, and ALA. Human beings get Docosahexaenoic acid or (DHA) from breast milk, fish or algae oil.

Eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA or also known as icosapentaenoic acid) can be obtained from fish, specifically by eating oily fish such as salmon, herring, mackerel, menhaden and sardine, fish oil and various kinds of edible seaweed and phytoplankton. The Alpha-Linolenic acid or ALA can be obtained from plant-based sources such as flaxseeds, chia seeds, nuts (especially walnuts) and certain kinds of vegetable oils.

Hence, omega 3 fatty acids play an important role in both the growth and proper functioning of the human body. To get optimum levels of omega-3 fatty acids into your eating plan, make sure you add the right amount of them into your diet by eating whole foods enriched with the nutrient.

Omega 3 Essential Fatty Acids and the Difference between Omega-3 and Omega-6

Although we are aware of the [benefits of omega-3 fatty acids](#), still we are not able to get enough of them, instead, we tend to get higher levels of a different fatty acid, omega-6, in our diets, which you get from vegetable oils and meats.



When we fail to maintain the balance between Omega-3 fatty acids and Omega-6 fatty acids, we suffer from chronic inflammation, which has been linked to certain conditions such as arthritis to heart disease. So, what should we do? Up your omega-3 fatty acid intake. Besides trying to get enough fish oil or via omega 3 fatty acids supplements, try and eat the foods mentioned in this article to get enough of the essential nutrient.

Omega 3 Fatty Acids Benefits- Why should you Stock on them?

Omega 3 fatty acid benefits are just too many to ignore, here are some science backed pieces of evidence which prove omega 3 fatty acid is the superfood which will surely up your nutrition game.

- **Omega-3s Can make you less anxious-** Depression is a mental disorder affecting many, and thanks to the frenetic pace of the modern world, so is anxiety. Is there a solution for that? Yes, consumption of omega-3s fatty acids regularly can protect people from getting depressed.

There are actually three types of omega-3 fatty acids: ALA, EPA and DHA and of the three of them, EPA is regarded as the best at fighting depression; in fact, some studies have revealed that omega 3 fatty acids can treat depression better than even Prozac, which is an anti-depressant drug.

- **Your vision problems can be solved with omega-3 fatty acids**

Your retina is made from DHA, a type of omega-3, and an important structural component of the brain and also the retina of the eye.



When you don't get enough DHA, vision problems may arise. But there is some good news! You can reduce your risk of macular degeneration, which causes blindness and eye damage with omega-3 fatty acids.

- **Omega-3s takes care of your brain health during pregnancy and early Life**

Omega-3s take care of your brain growth in infants. There is a reason for that and that is DHA makes up for 40% of polyunsaturated fatty acids in the brain and makes up for a whopping 60% in the retina. So, now you know how important it is to feed infants with a DHA-fortified formula to give them better eye-sight. Also, when you are pregnant, it makes sense to have food rich in omega 3 as it helps benefit the child.

- **Omega-3s takes care of your heart**

Guess what is the leading cause of death in the world? Heart attacks and strokes. So, if you are fond of eating fish, you can have more of it now, as researchers have discovered that fish-eating people have lower incidences of this kind of diseases. It can slash down the risk of triglycerides, blood pressure, HDL cholesterol, plaque, and inflammation. But yes, just popping that pill may not [reduce the risk of heart diseases](#). It needs lifestyle changes in the form of clean eating and exercise.



- **Omega-3s aids children suffering from ADHD**

Many kids nowadays suffer from behavioural problems such as inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsive behaviour, this disorder is known as Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

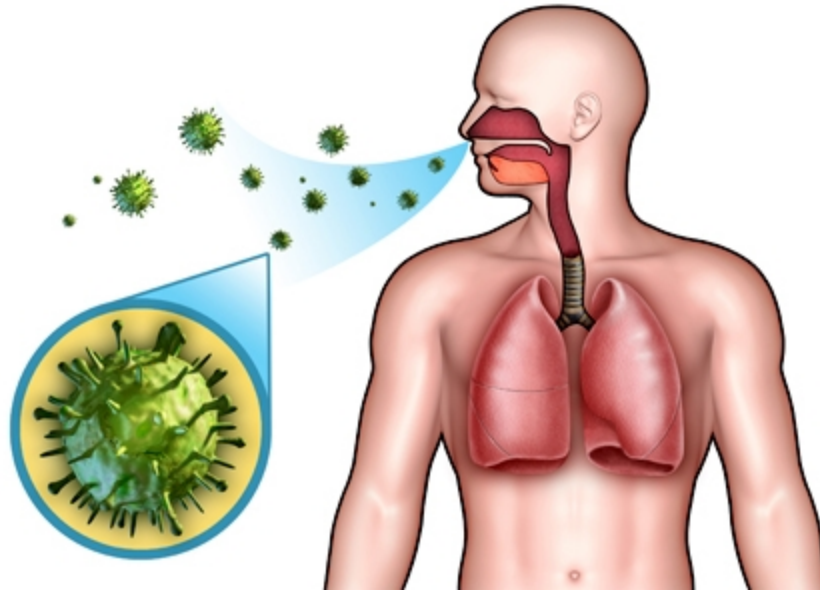
Several studies have shown that including omega-3 fatty acids supplements or foods can actually aid children with ADHD reducing the symptoms of the condition to a great extent.

- **Omega-3s can help with the symptoms of a host of diseases**

An impaired metabolic syndrome can mean you can have conditions like belly fat, hypertension, insulin resistance and high levels of triglycerides and low HDL levels. It is a major health problem and can also include heart disease and diabetes.

- **Omega-3s Can Control Inflammation**

Inflammation is important for our body as it helps fight infection and also repair damage in the body. But what affects our body is chronic inflammation.



However, sometimes inflammation can continue for a long time even when infection or injury is present. This long term inflammation can lead to chronic diseases like heart disease and cancer. Omega-3 fatty acids pills or foods can slash the production of molecules and substances which are said to increase inflammation, molecules such as eicosanoids and cytokines.

- **Omega-3s take care of bone and joint health**

The two diseases that cause a disorder of the skeletal system are osteoporosis and arthritis. How do omega-3's work? They work by increasing the amount of calcium in bones. This also [reduces the risk of osteoporosis](#). It is seen that patients suffering from arthritis or any other bone disorders have seen dramatic improvements in grip strength by including omega 3 fatty acid foods into their diets.

- **Omega-3 Fats can get you flawless skin**

DHA and EPA, the two chief components of the skin are responsible for good healthy cell membranes, which make up a large part of the skin. Flawless skin equals to soft and supple moist skin, which is without any signs of aging. Supplementing with omega 3 fatty acids can also prevent sun damage and prevents acne.

The Best Omega 3 Fatty Acids Foods for Optimal Health

Now that you have realized how important Omega-3 fatty acids are for your optimal health; how do you think you can add more of it to your diet? We have just the right omega 3 fatty acids foods for you to have. Eating fatty fish about 2-3 times a week can take care of your nutrient needs, but if you are not too fond of fish, there are some other food sources too which you can feast on or there are other ways of having this nutrient, besides fish. Let us know more about the fish and other foods enriched with these disease-fighting fatty acids.



Start eating these real foods over the pills and reap the benefits.

1. Tofu- Think tofu is bland and slimy? Well, think again, as it has tremendous weight loss potential. Not to forget it is a pretty decent source of omega 3 fatty acid too! So, a total win-win? We think it is! Like all the healthy foods, it boasts of some other benefits too, like it reduces cholesterol and flattens your belly. Tofu, indeed is a must include into your diet chart.

2. Mustard seeds- Who would have thought that one tiny teaspoon of ground mustard provides as much as 100 milligrams of omega-3s? If you thought that's all the goodness there is in these tiny seeds, then you are wrong, because it boasts of some plus serious fat-burning qualities.

This tiny seed packs enough punch to boost your metabolism to 25% or more, several hours after eating. The allyl isothiocyanates compounds give the seeds the flavour and also the weight loss enhancing qualities. Swap your black pepper sometimes with mustard seed powder and tease your taste buds to a tantalisingly hot flavour. Your bored taste buds will come alive again.

3. Walnuts- These antioxidant rich nuts contain the most omega-3 fatty acids amongst a host of nuts or seeds. This shields your heart against many heart diseases. It reduces your elevated levels of blood pressure besides decreasing inflammation, especially at the time of stress. This combination, according to a recent study, is highly protective against heart disease. Whether you munch on a handful to keep your afternoon slump at bay or whether you plan to toss them into salads, you will be able to reap the benefits of these super delicious and nutritious walnuts. It is more than just providing you with omega 3 fatty acids benefits.

4. Flax seeds and flaxseed oil- Flaxseed contain a kind of omega-3 called alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), which then gets converted to eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), in your body. These two compounds can be found in fish. It contains a nutty flavour which can be used in smoothies or in baked goods like bread. Just two tablespoons of ground flaxseed contain as much as 3,800 mg of ALA omega 3s.



5. Wild rice- So, which kind of rice should you choose? White rice, brown rice or black rice? Looks like it is black rice or wild rice which is being favoured by all those who are watching their waistlines. This native American grain has a lot of fiber and protein, almost double the humble white rice and fewer calories too, hence rising up the popularity. It is a whole grain and is great for [weight-loss and losing belly fat](#).

6. Red lentils- What's not to like about red lentils? It is an inexpensive way of getting valuable nutrients. Plus it is a hunger-slayer and great for losing weight too. It contains a substance called resistant starch which triggers a molecule known as acetate, which signals the brain to stop eating, the perfect way to regulate appetite and boost metabolism. To feel full for longer periods, that's what we all want, right? Also, a cup of red lentils contains 480 mg of omega 3 fatty acids, so it is certainly one of the better sources of omega 3 fatty acids.

7. Chia seeds- These seeds are a weight loss wonder and a versatile way to boost your omega 3 fatty acids. It can be added to your salads, smoothies, stir-fries and give all your meals a nutritional boost. In fact, adding these seeds can be a great way to add the right dose of omega-3 fatty acids to your diet. It contains as much as 2500 mg per tablespoon of omega 3 fatty acids.



8. Salmon- It is true that a salmon a day can keep the inflammation away. It is a great source of omega 3 fatty acids, EPA and DHA and rich in Vitamin D and it has a generous amount of protein and Salmon contains high levels of the omega-3 fats – EPA and DHA. If you eat salmon at least twice or thrice per week, you can greatly lower the incidences of heart attack, arrhythmia, high blood pressure, and embolism.

Now, it doesn't seem too difficult to get your daily dose of Omega-3 fatty acids with whole foods, does it? When you are opting for omega 3 fatty acid capsules or pills, try and not exceed the recommended amount (by FDA) that amounts to 2 grams per day. It's always a good idea to consult your doctor first, before going on a pill-popping spree!

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