

## WELLNESS EDUCATION

### OMEGA-3 FATS

#### What are they?

- A group of fats that decrease inflammation in our body. They are rich in polyunsaturated fats, which also provide nutrients to develop and maintain your body's cells.
- The two active ingredients that make up omega-3 fatty acids are EPA (eicosapentanoic acid) and DHA (docosahexanoic acid).
- Plant based sources of omega-3's tend to contain ALA (alpha-linolenic acid). It is not clear how much of it is converted into DHA/EPA and there are fewer studies showing its benefits. Usual dose of ALA is 1-2 grams per day.
- Helps prevent or treat certain health problems that are associated with inflammation. Some examples include:
  - Heart Disease
  - Asthma
  - Cancer
  - Autoimmune diseases such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis
- They also promote healthy infant development in pregnancy.
- This is a good source of calories for healthy weight gain.

*(more valuable information on reverse)*



# NUTRITION



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### Where do I get them?

- Fish that live in cold water
  - Chinook, Atlantic or Pacific salmon (1-1.5 gms/3 ounces)
  - Wild oysters (0.67 gram/3 ounces)
  - Canned pink salmon (0.95-1 gram/3 ounces)
  - Canned light tuna (0.2-0.25 grams/3 ounces)
  - Shrimp (0.24 grams/3 ounces cooked)
- Plant-based foods – contain ALA
  - Flaxseed Oil (7.3 grams/1 tablespoon)
  - Flaxseeds (2.3 gms/1 tablespoon)
  - Black walnuts (0.76 grams/1 ounce)
  - Chia seeds (5.06 grams/1 ounce)
  - Firm tofu (0.7 grams/1/2 cup)
  - Canola oil (1.2 grams/1 tablespoon)
  - Soybean oil (0.9 grams/1 tablespoon)
- Supplements
  - Fish oil – can be taken as capsules or as a liquid
  - Algal oil – vegetarian source

### How much do I need?

- A good rule of thumb for most people using fish oil supplements for prevention of heart disease is to take 1000 mg (1 gram) daily (including both EPA + DHA).
- 1-2 tablespoons of ground flaxseed per day is a standard dose of ALA.
- Generally, fish oil supplements can be safer than fish meat as far as being contaminated by mercury, PCB's and other toxins. When fish oil is processed, the toxins tend to be filtered out. Most supplements, especially well-respected national brands, have been found to be toxin-free.
- Patients taking blood thinners should consult their physician before taking omega-3 supplements due to a slight increased risk of bleeding.

### How can I “sneak it in?”

- Add ground flaxseed or chia seeds to cereals, muffin or bread recipes, or blend into smoothies.
- Buy canned salmon and add to salads, dips or fish chowder.
- Pack walnuts in your purse or car for an on-the-go snack.
- Mix tuna with mayonnaise and top crackers for a snack, make a tuna sandwich for lunch, or tuna casserole for dinner.
- Make stir fry with vegetables and firm tofu or shrimp for dinner on a regular basis.
- Buy frozen, pre-portioned salmon or salmon burgers for a last minute dinner idea any night of the week.