



Latest Health Benefits of Fresh Fish/October 2004

Protect Against Stroke:

Eating fish just one to three times a month can protect against stroke according to researchers at the Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University. A meta-analysis of the existing science literature on the subject revealed that stroke risk declined with an increase in fish consumption, those eating the most fish – five times or more a week – getting the most benefit.

Protect Against Heart Disease:

A 16 year study of nearly 85,000 women found that those who ate fish 2-4 times weekly cut their risk of heart disease by 30 percent, compared with women who rarely ate fish. Women who ate fish five or more times weekly reduced their risk by an even greater degree.

How?

Omega 3 fatty acids work by making blood clotting more difficult; thereby preventing a heart attack itself. They relax our arteries, help keep them from becoming clogged with plaque and improve blood circulation in the heart. They can also change the chemistry of the heart, improving heartbeat and flow. They lower blood fats (triglycerides) and blood pressure which makes heart attacks less likely.

Are fish oil supplements just as good as eating fish?

According to Harvard Health, "Nutrient rich food help the heart but supplements form a bottle do not...Eating fish may be the best bet. Aim for two or more portions a week. If you are fishing for good health, consider fish first, fish oil capsules second.

Lower Cholesterol:

Researchers from Tufts University examined the effect of a low fish or high fish diet on cholesterol levels in 22 men and women – Consumption of a high fish diet was associated with a significant reduction in medium, small very low density lipoprotein. The study concluded that higher fish intake in the contest of a diet low in fat and cholesterol could favorably impact VLDL and HDL.

Newborn Development:

University of Connecticut 2002 study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition found that pregnant women who eat fish with Omega 3 fatty acids have babies who show signs of more mature brain development.

Combatting Depression in Post Partum Moms:

May 2003 – study released at the annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association found that the more Omega 3 fatty acids a woman consumed in seafood during her third trimester, the less likely she would show signs of major depression at that time and for up to eight months after the baby. Women with the highest intakes – eating fish 2-3 times a week, had a depression rate ½ that of those with the lowest intakes.

How?

Omega 3 fatty acids lower the risk of depression because they are key building blocks of the brain and studies show that low levels in the diet are associated with low levels of a brain chemical called serotonin. Low levels of serotonin, in turn are tied to depression.

Longevity:

Journal of American Medical Association study showed that mortality rates were 65% lower among elderly people who combined a so-called Mediterranean diet with 30 minutes of daily exercise, moderate drinking and no tobacco use. Key to the Mediterranean diet is that cuisine from these regions favor olive oil, legumes, nuts, seeds, grains, FISH, vegetables and potatoes but little meat and dairy!

Reduces Risk of Alzheimer's Disease:

The Tufts University Health and Nutrition letter published the findings of the Rush Institute for Healthy Aging in Chicago which stated that when they compared the fish-eating patterns of more than 800 men and women ages 65-94 and then checked to see whether they developed Alzheimer disease, they found that those who ate at least one fish meal a week were significantly less likely to end up with Alzheimer disease than those who never or hardly ever ate fish.

A study in the Netherlands of 1613 men and women aged 45-70 with a diet traditionally high in fish, suggests that the type of fat consumed plays a role in a person's mental flexibility, speed and overall functioning. According to researchers from the University Medical Center Utrecht, people who eat foods rich in Omega fatty acids and consume plenty of fatty fish may have a lower risk for impaired brain functioning and speed compared to those who don't follow a similar diet.

How?

One of the omega-3 fatty acids in fish, commonly known as DHA is among the most important fatty acids in components of brain cell gray matter called phospholipids. The more fish you eat, the more of these omega-3s will end up in those phospholipids. That's key because the specific part of the brain cells in which phospholipids are found are the membranes which control the entrance and exit of material to and from each cell. Putting more DHA into them by changing the diet to include more fish therefore has an influence on cell to cell communication, affecting nerve conductions, neurotransmitter release and other things that allow brain cells to send messages to each other. Which fish is relatively high in the Omega 3 fatty acid DHA? Salmon!

Reduced Risk of Prostate Cancer

National Cancer Institute Study evaluating 47,886 men over 14 years found that men with diets high in the omega 3 fatty acids found primarily in fish may reduce their risk of developing prostate cancer, the second most common form of cancer among American men, behind skin cancer. Two particular omega 3 acids, EPA and DHA were examined. Men with the highest intake of EPA and DHA combined, reduced their risk of developing prostate cancer by 11% and advanced prostate cancer by 26%. Fish high in EPA and DHA include salmon, Arctic char, albacore tuna, Atlantic mackerel and herring.