



The Be Fit Minute

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Omega-3s: Is Your Diet Enough?

This type of fat can have a dramatic effect on your cardiovascular system. It can decrease blood pressure, reduce cholesterol, and lessen the risk of blood clots.

It may also decrease inflammation and support brain cell function, potentially helping to treat diseases ranging from dementia and depression to arthritis.

Seafood is a good source of omega-3s fats, also called EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid).

Are you consuming enough seafood to meet your omega-3 needs?

	A	B	C
1. How many times per week do you eat 4 ounces (about the size of a deck of cards) Atlantic or Coho salmon, mackerel, bluefin tuna, herring, or sardines?	0	1	2+
2. How many times per week do you eat 4 ounces pink or Sockeye salmon, trout, halibut, bluefish, pollock, squid or 1 can albacore tuna?	0-1	2-3	4+
3. How many times per week do you eat 12 mussels or oysters?	0-1	2-3	4+
4. How many times per day do you eat 4 ounces scallops, lobster, or white fish (e.g. sole, cod, haddock); or 6 clams or canned anchovy fillets ; or 1 can chunk light tuna?	<1	1	2

A's: You are not meeting your needs. See a dietitian on how best to increase your intake.

One B: You are consuming at least half of the amount of omega-3s that you need. Can you add 1 or 2 servings per week of fatty fish, such as salmon? (Salmon is also relatively low in mercury.)

One C or Two B's: Congratulations, you are likely meeting your omega-3 needs through your diet.

Are you a vegetarian? Do you avoid seafood?

Plant-based omega-3 fats, also called ALA (alpha-linolenic acid), are found in seeds, nuts, oils, and soy. These are healthy sources, but be mindful of the calories it might take to meet daily needs.

Recommended Daily Intake of Plant-Based Omega-3s

Food	Portion To Meet Daily Needs	Calories
Flaxseed Oil	½ tablespoon	60
Chia Seeds	1 tablespoon	60
Flaxseed, Ground	1¼ tablespoon	50
Walnut oil	2 tablespoons	240
Canola oil	2½ tablespoons	310
Soy nuts, roasted	1 cup	520
Tofu	2 cups (16 ounces)	350
Edamame, shelled	3 cups	600
Miso	2½ cups	1200
Walnuts	100 halves	1300
Pecans	200 halves	2100
Pistachios or pumpkin seeds	7½ cups	5300

It is best to get nutrients from food when possible. Fish oil pills can be high in mercury and may be dangerous to take with blood thinning medication. Consult your registered dietitian or doctor before taking any supplements or making any major changes to your diet.

This is general advice, **to schedule an appointment with a registered dietitian (RD): call 617.726.2779.**

Appendix: Omega-3 Content of Common Foods

Aim for 3500 mg of EPA/DHA per week from seafood		
<u>Animal Sources of Omega 3s</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Herring	4 ounces	2300 mg
Salmon, Atlantic or Coho	4 ounces	1800 mg
Mackerel or Bluefin Tuna	4 ounces	1700 mg
Sardines	4 ounces	1400 mg
Trout or Halibut	4 ounces	1000 mg
Canned Albacore Tuna	4 ounces	1000 mg
Bluefish	4 ounces	900 mg
Blue Mussels or Oysters	12 medium	900 mg
Salmon, Pink or Sockeye	4 ounces	800 mg
Squid	4 ounces	800 mg
Pollock	4 ounces	600 mg
Anchovy Fillets, Canned	6 each	300 mg
White Fish (e.g. Flounder, Sole, Cod, Haddock)	4 ounces	300 mg
Canned Chunk Light Tuna	4 ounces	200 mg
Clams	6 large	200 mg
Scallops or Lobster	4 ounces	200 mg

Aim for at least 1500 mg of ALA per day		
Vegetarian? Optimal intake may be closer to double this recommendation (or 3000 mg).		
<u>Plant Sources of Omega 3s</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Flaxseed Oil	1 tablespoon	7000 mg
Chia Seeds	2 tablespoon	5000 mg
Flaxseeds	2 tablespoon	4800 mg
Walnut oil	1 tablespoon	1400 mg
Canola oil	1 tablespoon	1300 mg
Tofu	½ cup (4 ounces)	700 mg
Soy Nuts, Roasted	¼ cup	700 mg
Edamame, Shelled	½ cup	500 mg
Walnuts	10 halves	300 mg
Pecans	10 halves	150 mg
Pistachios or Pumpkin Seeds	¼ cup	100 mg
Miso	1 tbsp	80 mg