

ESSENTIAL FATTY ACIDS

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Omeegas:

All fatty acids that contain the “omega” label are **unsaturated**. Unsaturated fatty acids are further classified as either *monounsaturated fatty acids* (omega-7 and omega-9 fats), or *polyunsaturated fatty acids* (omega-3 and omega-6 fats).

Omega 3 essential fatty acids:

Essential fatty acid means our bodies cannot make it, so we must get it from food.

EPA and DHA are omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids and can be found in *fatty fish* such as:

- trout, salmon, and albacore tuna.

ALA is the omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acid and can be found in a variety of plant foods such as:

- flaxseeds, chia seeds, walnuts, kale, canola oil, brussels sprouts, and spinach.

Americans are encouraged to increase omega-3 fatty acid intake by eating fish at least twice per week. Try to also eat nuts and seeds for ALA (adequate intake is 1.1 to 1.6 grams daily).

- EPA plays a big role in supporting heart health and may help reduce inflammation in the body.
- DHA is an important part in cell membranes, which plays an important role in brain development and function.

OMEGA 3 AND 6 FATTY ACIDS:

BOTH ARE UNSATURATED FATS

OMEGA 3 FOOD SOURCES: TROUT, SALMON, TUNA, FLAXSEEDS, CHIA SEEDS, AND WALNUTS

OMEGA 6 FOOD SOURCES: VEGETABLE OILS, NUTS, AND SEEDS

AIM FOR 2 SERVINGS OF SEAFOOD PER WEEK

Table 1 Food Sources of Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Food	Serving	Omega-3s (g)
Salmon, Atlantic, farmed, cooked	3 oz	1.83
Herring, Atlantic, cooked	3 oz	1.71
Sardines, canned in tomato sauce, drained	3 oz	1.19
Trout, rainbow, wild, cooked	3 oz	0.84
Shrimp, cooked	3 oz	0.24

SOURCE: [HTTPS://ODS.OD.NIH.GOV/FACTSHEETS/OMEGA3FATTYACIDS-HEALTHPROFESSIONAL](https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/OMEGA3FATTYACIDS-HEALTHPROFESSIONAL)

Omega 6 essential fatty acids:

LA is an omega 6 fat and the most common polyunsaturated fat in the diet. LA is found in:

- vegetable oils, nuts and seeds.

AA is also an omega 6 and is found primarily in:

- animal fats (including fish).

LA is the most highly consumed polyunsaturated fat in the Western diet.

Most Americans meet their needs for omega 6s, so it is recommended to reduce intake of omega 6s and increase intake of omega 3s.

Supplement	EPA + DHA mg/serving	Daily Dosage
21 st Century Fish Oil	300 mg	1 to 3 enteric coated softgels
Swanson Omega-3 Fish Oil-Lemon Flavor	300 mg	2 softgels
Nature Made Fish Oil	360 mg	2 softgels
Life Extension Super Omega-3	600 mg	8 softgels
Member's Mark [Sam's Club] Fish Oil	600 mg	1 softgel
Carlson Elite Omega-3	800 mg	1 to 5 softgels
Natural Factors Ultra Strength RxOmega-3	900 mg	1 softgel
Solgar Omega 3 950	950 mg	2 softgels
Viva Labs Ultra Strength Omega-3 Fish Oil	1,000 mg	2 softgels
NutriGold Triple Strength Omega-3 Gold	1,060 mg	1 softgel

— Source: ConsumerLab.com. Accessed January 6, 2017.

*Products met their label claims for omega-3s, quality standards regarding lead, cadmium, arsenic, and polychlorinated biphenyls, and were not spoiled and, if labeled as

Supplements

Try to meet your needs with food first, but if you can't eat fish twice per week you may want to consider supplementation. Supplement should contain:

- EPA and DHA
- Look for certifications (like NSF) to ensure it is high quality and free of heavy metals and other contaminants.

If you supplement, try taking the omega 3 with a meal, preferably one that contains other fats to improve absorption.

For vegetarians, vegans, or people with a confirmed allergy to fish oil supplement with **microalgae** to meet DHA and EPA needs.

Always talk to your primary care physician before starting a new supplement.

Information from: Today's Dietitian and Food and Nutrition.

DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS:

Without specifying a preference for monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats, the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend replacing some saturated fats with unsaturated fats to reduce cardiovascular disease risk factors. Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend eating **two servings of seafood per week**, which provides an average of 250 mg of omega-3s per week, for reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and obesity. **For convenience**, one can focus on buying tuna, salmon and sardines in cans or pouches. The fish can be added easily to pasta, rice, salad, etc. It is also recommended to eat nuts and seeds a few times each week.