

Fats for health: omega-3 fatty acids

Polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAs) are liquid oils. They include omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids.

omega-6 fats are vegetable oils like corn, sunflower and safflower.

omega-3 fats have 3 forms: ALA, EPA, and DHA.



- ALA sources are canola oil, fish, flax seed, nuts, and soybeans.
- EPA and DHA sources are fatty fish, like salmon, tuna, and mackerel.

Foods high in omega-3 fats seem to protect health. Eating them regularly may lower your risk of ...

- coronary heart disease
- stroke
- blindness from age related macular degeneration.
- high triglycerides

They enhance your immune function. You may have fewer or shorter illnesses.

They prevent your blood platelets from being as sticky. You have less risk of a blood clot.

Studies sponsored by the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute have shown that eating 3 ounces of a fatty fish 2 times a week can...

- lower your risk of having a heart attack by 44%
- reduce the incidence of strokes caused by blood clots
- improve visual development of your unborn baby during your pregnancy
- reduce the amount of tenderness and morning stiffness of rheumatoid arthritis

Should you take a supplement instead of eating foods high in omega-3 fats?

The American Heart Association recommends you not take a fish oil supplement without the knowledge and supervision of your doctor. Supplements may be recommended if you...

- have very high triglycerides
- have not gotten results from other medicines and lifestyle changes
- are not at risk for pancreatitis

Alternatives to 3 ounces of fatty fish are 1 ounce of flax seed or walnuts, or 3 ounces of soybeans.

