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Why do I Need Fish Oil?

You have been prescribed fish oil by your Naturopathic Doctor for many potential reasons. It is estimated that 85% or more of people in the Western world are deficient in omega-3 fatty acids and most get far too much of the omega-6 fatty acids. Vegetarian diets, for example, tend to be very high in omega-6.

It is ideal to have a 2:1 ratio of omega 3s: omega 6s in your diet. Omega 6 fatty acids are found in vegetable oils, nuts & seeds, whole grains, evening primrose oil (EPO), and animal meats. While these are beneficial in your diet, too much in relation to omega 3s can promote inflammation in your body, which can lead to a whole host of other problems (ask your Naturopathic Doctor for more information if interested). Omega 3 fatty acids are found in soy, flaxseed, leafy green vegetables, and cold water fish.

Cold water fish provide the most readily absorbed form of these fatty acids. However, the potential for heavy metal toxicity in recent years means that we have to monitor how much of these fish we consume. Good quality cold pressed fish oil however has been processed to extract any potential heavy metals from the fish meaning you are left with only the beneficial omega 3 fatty acids. High quality fish oils include brands such as Nutrasea® and Seroyal/Genstra Super EFAs®.

Freshly ground flax seeds also contain omega 3 fatty acids. However, most health experts do not consider flax seed a beneficial source of omega-3 fatty acids due to the very low conversion rate of flax omega-3 (ALA) to the useable omega-3 metabolites EPA & DHA found in fish. Many degenerative conditions decrease the body's ability to convert omega 3 precursors to the active and available forms thus making flax seeds much less effective.

Fish oil contains Eicosapentenoic acid (EPA) and Docosahexanoic acid (DHA); these are important components that are major constituents of phospholipids found in every cell membrane of the body but most importantly in your brain, eyes, and testes/ovaries. Therefore, omega 3 fatty acids beneficially alter the composition of cell membranes in your body.

Fish oil is beneficial in the treatment of the following diseases & conditions:

- Acquired immune deficiency
- Aggression
- Alcoholism
- Anxiety
- Atherosclerosis
- Asthma
- Cancer
- Candida overgrowth
- Cardiac irregularities
- Cardiovascular disease
- Crohn's disease
- Depression
- Diabetes mellitus
- Painful menses
- Eating disorders
- Eczema
- Glaucoma
- Headaches
- Hypertension
- Infection
- Learning disabilities
- Lupus
- Multiple sclerosis
- Osteoporosis
- Peptic ulcer disease
- Psoriasis
- Peripheral vascular disease
- Pregnancy induced preeclampsia (high blood pressure)
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Ulcerative colitis

Fish oils have the following health benefits:

- Lowers blood triglycerides - high levels of triglycerides are known to be a risk factor for cardiovascular disease.
- Helps reduce likelihood of blood clots - fish oil benefits include the prevention of blood platelets from sticking together and forming blood clots
- Fish oils can lower blood pressure by increasing production of the series 3 prostaglandins thereby blocking the production of series 2 prostaglandins produced by omega-6 fatty acids
- Fish oils help to stimulate your blood circulation and avoid problems such as varicose veins and Raynauds disease.
- Many studies have proven that fish oils improve your brain function.
- Lowers risk of developing Alzheimer's Disease - studies have found that fish oil seems to help protect the nervous system
- Fish oils benefit you greatly if you suffer from depression. A lack of omega 3 has been linked to depression.
- Improves immune system function - fish oil benefits and studies have linked lowered risk of breast cancer and prostate cancer to the consumption of fish oil.
- Reduces inflammation from such conditions as rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis and gout - fish oil health benefits come from the DHA and EPA that reduce the amount of inflammation-causing substances.
- In some animal studies, fish oil was found to inhibit the growth and metastasis of cancerous tumors

