

Omega-3 Fatty Acids Can Add Years to Your Life

A new study shows that people with higher blood levels of the long chain omega-3 fatty acids have lower mortality rates and live up to 2.22 years longer than those with low blood levels. (The new study published in the Annals of Internal Medicine, tested blood levels of omega-3 fatty acids in 2,692 adults age 65 and older who were participating in a 16-year-long cardiovascular health study.)

Overall, participants with the highest total omega-3 blood levels had a 27 percent lower risk of total mortality and lived more than two years longer than those with low omega-3 blood levels. By testing their blood levels, researchers were able to more accurately determine who was eating the most omega-3 fats in their diet rather than trying to estimate the amount of omega-3s in a diet history. This is the first time omega-3s have shown a decrease in total mortality and an increase in longevity in healthy people (no heart disease).

All of the omega-3 fatty acids (DHA, DPA, EPA, ALA) showed a protective benefit. The plant source of omega-3s (ALA) was linked to a lower risk of heart disease in Harvard's Health Professional Follow-up study. ALA is an essential fatty acid, required for life. In this study, DHA was most closely related to decreased risk of death from coronary heart disease and from arrhythmias. DPA was strongly protective against stroke, and EPA was closely linked to a decreased risk of nonfatal heart attack.

Researchers found the fastest rise in blood omega-3 fatty acids occurred when people increased their intake from near-zero to 400 mg of omega-3 fatty acids daily. This provides a good reference point to determine how much omega-3 fatty acids we need daily for best health. The very long chain omega-3 fatty acids (DHA, DPA, EPA) are found primarily in fish, and eating two servings of fish weekly seems to meet the need for these omega-3 fatty acids.

Eating the actual fish seems to be more protective than taking fish oil pills, which have not always been shown to be protective against heart disease. If you don't like or want to eat fish, you can take DHA and EPA supplements made from algae (the same source the fish get their omega-3s from). Aim for an intake of about 400 mg per day. Other good sources of plant-based omega-3 fatty acids (ALA) are flax meal, walnuts, soy, canola and soy oil, and pecans. Aim for about 1.5 to 2 grams of ALA daily for best health.

Source: <http://www.wellsources.com/articles-mhc/Omega-3-Fatty-Acids-Can-Add-Years-to-Your-Life.html>



**“You can still enjoy a cocktail before dinner.
Have you ever tried a fish oil martini?”**

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