



# Seafood Health Facts: Making Smart choices

## Balancing the Benefits and Risks of Seafood Consumption

### Resources for Healthcare Providers and Consumers

## Health Benefits of Omega-3s [1]

A large proportion of the fat in seafood is a unique kind of polyunsaturated fat, called *omega-3 fatty acids* or *omega-3s*, which can provide additional health benefits.

There is a significant amount of scientific evidence that suggests that *omega-3* fatty acids may play a role in reducing the risk of heart disease, which is the leading cause of death in most Western countries. Researchers have found that omega-3 fatty acids can make blood less likely to clot and block blood vessels, and that consuming omega-3s may also decrease levels of some blood fats and possibly cholesterol. Possible relationships between omega-3 fatty acids and other disorders such as cancer, arthritis, and asthma are also currently being studied.

*Omega-3* fatty acids are essential fatty acids that are required for healthy human development. They need to be obtained through food. Fish and shellfish are the main dietary sources of two important *omega-3* fatty acids known as EPA and DHA. Plants contain a different omega-3 fatty acid called ALA, which is made into EPA and DHA at a low rate in the human body.

EPA and DHA can help reduce the risk of heart disease and contribute to healthy brain and vision development in infants. Health organizations suggest an EPA+DHA intake of at least 250 to 500 milligrams per day. The American Heart Association recommends 1000 milligrams of EPA+DHA per day for patients with coronary heart disease, and two meals of oily fish per week for people without heart disease.

All fish and shellfish contain some *omega-3s* but the amount can vary. Generally, fattier fish contain more *omega-3* fatty acids than leaner fish. Fish with medium to high levels of omega-3 fatty acids include oily ocean fish, such as salmon, herring, mackerel and sardines. To view a Table that compares the levels of omega-3 fatty acids in seafood products [click here](#) [2].

 [final-seafood-health-3fold-brochure.pdf](#) [3]

*Adapted from: Seafood and Health: The Omega-3 Connection - A Resource for Food and Nutrition Professionals, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Ken Gall, Carole Bisogni, Christina Stark, Carol Sperazza, Maria Sant'Angelo and Gail Bromley*



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<https://www.seafoodhealthfacts.org/seafood-nutrition/patients-and-consumers/health-benefits-omega-3s>

### Links

[1] <https://www.seafoodhealthfacts.org/seafood-nutrition/patients-and-consumers/health-benefits-omega-3s>

[2] [http://seafoodhealthfacts.org/seafood\\_nutrition/patients/omega\\_3\\_levels.php](http://seafoodhealthfacts.org/seafood_nutrition/patients/omega_3_levels.php)

[3] <https://www.seafoodhealthfacts.org/sites/default/files/final-seafood-health-3fold-brochure.pdf>