

Fish Oil (Omega-3 Fatty Acid) Supplements

BENEFITS

In high doses, fish oil capsules are powerful nutritional supplements that reduce levels of triglycerides and raise HDL (good) cholesterol levels in the blood. They may increase or decrease LDL (bad) cholesterol levels, depending on your cholesterol profile.

In low doses, fish oil reduces the stickiness of blood cells (platelets), reduces inflammation in the blood vessels, and may reduce irregular beats in the heart. For these reasons, some health care providers recommend a low-dose fish oil supplement after a heart attack.

INSTRUCTIONS

Always take fish oil capsules with meals. To reduce burping, store the capsules in the refrigerator and swallow them cold.

SIDE EFFECTS

The following side effects may occur while you take fish oil capsules. Most of these side effects are mild and will decrease over time. They are rare in patients who take low doses of fish oils.

- Gas (belching, flatulence)
- Abdominal discomfort
- Loose stools
- Weight gain (10 calories / capsule)
- Easy bruising or bleeding

YOUR RECOMMENDED DOSE

_____ milligrams (mg) of DHA +EPA per day
(see labels on each brand to determine number of capsules)

or

_____ capsules of _____ per day, with meal

SAFETY INFORMATION

Cod liver oil is not recommended because it is lower in omega-3 fatty acids and because large doses may provide too much vitamin A.

Some types of fish may be contaminated with mercury and PCBs, but when fish oil supplements are prepared, these dangerous elements are removed. For more detail on safety and purity of fish oil supplements, see the Environmental Defense Fund Fish Oil Guide at www.edf.org/page.cfm?tagID=16536 or Consumer Union Product Review of Fish Oils at www.consumerlab.com/results/omega3.asp

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS AND PHARMACISTS

DHA and EPA are the protective Omega-3 fats in fish oil.

For lipid-lowering therapy, daily use of 3000-4000 mg (3-4 grams) of omega-3 fatty acids (DHA + EPA) is required.

Following a heart attack, daily use of 1000 mg (1 gram) of omega-3 fatty acids (DHA +EPA) is recommended.

Flaxseed oil and other sources of ALA (alpha-linolenic acid) may **not** be used in place of fish oils because only a small amount of ALA is converted to EPA and DHA.

A chart comparing common fish oil preparations is found on page 2.

Examples of Fish Oil Supplements - DHA and EPA are the protective omega-3 fats in fish oil

Product / Manufacturer	Omega-3 fats mg per cap		900-1000 mg per day		3000 - 4000 mg/day	
	DHA	EPA	Dose/Day	Cost/Mo	Dose/Day	Cost/Mo
Advanced Nutrition Technology Super EPA 2000 capsules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UW Hospital Pharmacy 600 Highland Avenue Madison, WI 608-263-1280 • Mallatt's Pharmacy 3506 Monroe St. Madison, WI 608-238-3106 • Ordered from internet site (does not include cost of postage and handling) 	310	500	1 cap	\$13.50 \$9.90 \$12.00	4 caps	\$54.00 \$39.60 \$48.00
Carlson Super - Omega-3 capsules	200	300	2 caps	\$7.20	7 caps	\$25.20
Coromega orange or lime fish oil emulsion, packet	230	350	2 packets	\$16.20	6 packets	\$48.60
GNC triple strength fish oil capsules	253	647	1 cap	\$9.73	4 caps	\$38.95
Lovaza capsules (<i>Prescription only - cost may be covered by insurance</i>)	375	465	1 cap	\$45.00	4 caps	\$180.00
Mega-Red Omega 3 Krill oil capsules	27	45	14 caps	\$117.75	50 caps	\$420.00
Nature-made Odorless Fish oil	120	180	3 caps	\$11.70	12 caps	\$46.80
Nordic Naturals - Ultimate-Omega capsules	225	325	2 caps	\$28.20	6 caps	\$84.60
Nordic Naturals - Ultimate-Omega liquid, 1/2 teaspoon	550	825	1/3 tsp	\$17.50	1 1/4 tsp	\$65.62
Target Origin Double Strength Fish Oil	240	360	2 caps	\$6.69	6 caps	\$20.08
Target Trident Alaskan Salmon Oil	110	85	5 caps	\$21.00	17 caps	\$71.40
Twin Lab Complete EFA Omega 3-6-9	80	120	5 caps	\$24.00	17 caps	\$81.60
Walgreens - Finest One per Day Omega-3 Fish Oil Capsules, enteric coated	275	400	2 caps	\$8.40	5 caps	\$21.00
Walmart triple strength Spring Valley capsules	253	647	1 cap	\$4.50	4 caps	\$18.00

*Many fish oil products are available via the Internet and prices vary widely. The prices listed here are intended as a general guide. The listing of these products is for educational purposes only and does not represent endorsement by the UW Preventive Cardiology Program.

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