

# Heart-Healthy Eating: Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Client Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dietitian / Dietetic Technician \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

## What Are Omega-3 Fatty Acids?

Eating fats that provide omega-3 fatty acids may reduce risk of heart disease.

There are three types of omega-3 fatty acids:

- **Alpha linolenic acid:** This is in some vegetable oils, nuts, seeds, and soy foods.
- **EPA and DHA:** These are both found in fatty fish (salmon, tuna, mackerel, and sardines). EPA and DHA are also known as “long-chain omega-3 fatty acids.” They seem to provide the most benefit for the heart.

## Tips for Adding Omega-3 Fatty Acids to Your Meal Plan

- Select oils that provide omega-3 fat, such as canola oil or soybean oil.
- Add flaxseed oil, which is very high in omega-3 fat, to foods. If you use flaxseed, be sure it is ground up. Your body cannot digest the beneficial fat if the seeds are left whole.
- Enjoy walnuts. The walnut is the only common nut with alpha linolenic acid. Try walnut oil in salad dressings.
- Have two 4-ounce portions of fatty fish weekly. Enjoy salmon, albacore tuna, mackerel, or sardines.
- Try new ways to cook fish. Remember that fish cooks quickly. Try poaching it in an orange juice and herb mixture. Or bake fish with vegetables wrapped in foil.
- Read the labels on egg cartons and choose eggs that are high in omega-3 fatty acids. These eggs have more omega-3 fats than regular eggs because of the type of feed given to the chickens that lay them. Remember, however, that all egg yolks contain cholesterol.

## Fish Oil Supplements

If you wish to take fish oil supplements, the American Heart Association recommends that people with heart disease get 1 gram of omega-3 fatty acids from a combination of EPA and DHA per day.



*This handout may be duplicated for client education.*