

Smart Eating Makes the Grade!

Omega-3 Fats Deliver Oh Mega Benefits

What are Omega-3 Fats?

Omega-3 fats are healthy fats that are important for children's brain development and vision.

As children get older, omega-3 fats play a role in preventing the development of heart attacks, strokes, diabetes, asthma, inflammatory conditions and depression.

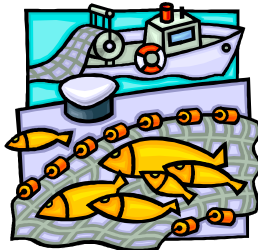
Omega-3 fats come from fresh fish and seafood and plant sources—but by far, fish sources are the BEST!

Omega-3 is added (fortified) to some foods but it is not necessary to buy them if you get enough omega-3 from other food sources that naturally have omega-3.



Practical ways to add omega-3 fats to your diet at home:

- ☑ Choose fresh, canned or unbattered fish, twice each week
- ☑ Mix a can of light tuna in with your macaroni and cheese
- ☑ Try a shrimp based stir-fry with a bed of brown rice and steamed broccoli
- ☑ Sprinkle chopped walnuts, pumpkin seeds, soy nuts or ground flaxseed on cereal, yogurt, and salads
- ☑ Use canola oil or soy bean oil for cooking and baking
- ☑ Try omega-3 fortified juice, milk, yogurt, egg, and margarine



Key Nutrition Points

- ◆ Canadians on average, including children, only get about half or less of the omega-3 fats they need.
- ◆ Consuming omega-3 fats can provide many health benefits like improved learning and memory.
- ◆ Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide recommends that Canadians eat at least two Food Guide servings of fish each week. A serving is 2-3 ounces (approximately the size of a deck of cards) or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (125 ml) canned fish.



A Caution for Parents/Caregivers

You may have heard concerns that some fish is contaminated with mercury. However, health professionals think the many health benefits of fish out-weigh the potential harm if you're including it in your diet only twice a week.



Canned tuna is a safe choice

- ◆ Choose "light" tuna; it has less mercury than "white" tuna (albacore, bluefin) and is generally less expensive.
- ◆ Avoid fresh tuna as it has the highest mercury content.
- ◆ Refer to Health Canada's website for more information on mercury in fish:

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/environ/merc-eng.php>

As a change from fresh fish ...

Try some fun-shaped BAKED fish sticks with a low-fat ranch dressing!



Disclaimer: Some recipes or food suggestions may not be suitable for people with allergies. Please check with your local school to identify foods that are acceptable or unacceptable in the classroom.

Swim like a fish

Whether it's at the pool or a local beach, swimming is a great way for children to get exercise and to socialize with friends. It is important for children to learn the habit of regular exercise early in life and swimming can be a fun way to keep fit.



The Bottom Line

Getting enough omega-3 fats can help to improve their mood, learning, memory, and vision. Try incorporating fish two times a week.

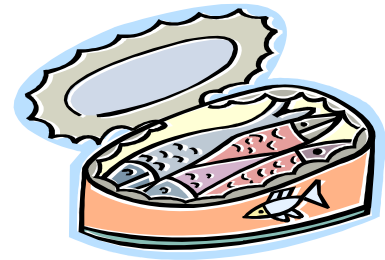


Oh Mega Lunch Ideas

- ◆ Salmon or tuna salad sandwich (with a cold pack)
- ◆ Mini tuna can with slice of whole-wheat bread or whole-wheat crackers
- ◆ Yogurt mixed with 1 tbsp ground flax seed
- ◆ Chopped walnuts mixed with raisins trail-mix
- ◆ Omega-3 yogurt with apple slices
- ◆ Hard boiled omega-3 egg with whole-wheat crackers and cheese slices!

Foods with omega-3 fats

BEST SOURCES	OTHER SOURCES
Salmon	Flaxseed, ground
Halibut	Soybeans
Sardines	Walnuts
Light tuna, canned in water	Omega-3 milk
Herring	Omega-3 juice
Rainbow trout, wild or farmed	Omega-3 eggs
Cod	Omega-3 margarine
Oysters	Omega-3 yogurt
Crab & Shrimp	Canola oil



Caution:

For young children, practice opening the can at home before sending them to school in their lunch. The edges of the lid are sharp.

Fabulous Fish Cakes (makes 15)

- 1 can (213 g) salmon
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) green onions, chopped (optional)
- 1 tbsp (15 ml) low-fat plain yogurt or low-fat mayonnaise
- 1 tsp (5 ml) lemon juice
- 1 cup (250 ml) bread crumbs or crushed, unsweetened, whole grain cereal
- 1 tsp (5 ml) prepared mustard
- 1 egg, beaten

Directions:

- ◆ Mix the first 7 ingredients in a bowl.
- ◆ Shape into balls (golf-ball size) and flatten into cakes.
- ◆ Roll fish cakes in 1/2 cup (125 ml) of the remaining bread crumbs.
- ◆ Heat oil in non-stick frying pan. Cook fish cakes.

For cooking:

- 1 tbsp (15 ml) olive oil or canola oil
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) of bread crumbs



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