

What are Omega 3 fatty acids?

They are a type of healthy fat that can help to protect the body against heart disease. They protect the heart in several ways:

- ♥ Help to prevent irregular heart beats
- ♥ Reduce the risk of clotting by making the blood less sticky
- ♥ Protect the walls of blood vessels from damage
- ♥ Help to improve the cholesterol balance of the blood by increasing levels of good cholesterol (HDL) and decreasing levels of bad cholesterol (LDL)

Where are Omega 3s found?

The main sources of Omega 3 fatty acids are oily fish such as herring, kippers, mackerel, pilchards, sardines and trout.

Omega 3s can also be found in linseeds, rapeseed, canola or flaxseed oil and Omega 3 enriched eggs.

How much Omega 3 should I eat?

To help protect against heart disease everyone should try to eat 1 serving of high Omega 3 fish and 1 serving of white fish a week

People who already have existing heart disease should aim for 2 to 3 servings of high Omega 3 fish a week to keep your heart healthy.

A serving of Omega 3 fish is roughly:

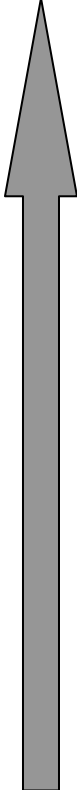
- ♥ 100g (4oz) of fresh, frozen or smoked oily fish
- ♥ 1 small, 1/2 medium or 1/3 large tin of oily fish

The list on the opposite page shows good sources of omega 3 from oily fish.

Tinned fish is as good a source of omega 3 as fresh fish, tends to be cheaper, and is convenient as it can be easily stored. The British Heart Foundation endorses the Princes brand of tinned fish as it has a higher Omega 3 content.

Don't forget to look for special offers on fresh or frozen fish.

Omega 3s found in fish

Mackerel	Fresh or frozen	
Kippers	Fresh or frozen	
Pilchards	Tinned in tomato sauce	
Tuna	Fresh or frozen	
Trout	Fresh or frozen	
Mackerel	Smoked or Tinned in curry, mustard and tomato sauces or brine	
Salmon	Fresh or frozen	
Sardines	Tinned in tomato sauce	
Herring	Pickled	
Sardines	Tinned in oil	
Herring	Fresh or frozen	Very High Source
Pilchards	Tinned in brine or oil	
Salmon (pink or red)	Tinned in brine, in pasta dishes and smoked salmon	
Herring	Tinned in mustard or tomato sauces	
Trout	Smoked	
Salmon	Fish cakes	
Fish pastes	Oily types e.g. salmon/sardine	
Cod	Fresh or frozen	
Haddock	Fresh or frozen	
Tuna	Tinned in brine or oil	

If you use fish tinned in oil or brine make sure it is drained well before use.

If you are eating less than 2 – 3 portions of high omega 3 fish a week add in more and try to build up gradually. The recipe ideas on the next page may be useful.

I don't eat fish, how do I get more Omega 3s?

Small amounts of Omega 3 are found in other foods such as:

- ♥ Dark green leafy vegetables such as spinach and kale
- ♥ Soya beans and tofu
- ♥ Nuts, especially walnuts, pecans, peanuts and almonds
- ♥ Omega 3 enriched foods such as Columbus eggs and supermarket own brand alternatives
- ♥ Rapeseed oil – most oils sold as vegetable oil are rapeseed oil, check the label. Use sparingly.
- ♥ Ground flaxseeds or linseeds and their oil.
- ♥ Omega 3 supplements. Aim for 0.5 – 1.0g omega 3 daily. (On the active ingredients will be listed as EPA and DHA)

Recipe ideas

Snack meals:

- ♥ Jacket potato with tinned salmon in low fat salad cream
- ♥ Tinned pilchards in tomato sauce or tinned mackerel in mustard or curry sauce on toast or a jacket potato
- ♥ Crackers with mackerel, salmon or tuna pâté

Main meals

- ♥ Steamed salmon steak with salad and new potatoes
- ♥ Grilled peppered mackerel with pasta salad
- ♥ Trout baked with lemon, served with vegetables and jacket potato
- ♥ Fish pie with a potato topping - use a mix of salmon and white fish
- ♥ Risotto with smoked mackerel and unsalted peanuts
- ♥ Any tinned fish in tomato sauce served with pasta
- ♥ Pizza with sardine or pilchards as a topping
- ♥ Grilled tuna steak, potatoes and stir fried vegetables

Omega 3 Fatty Acids and Heart Health



Compiled by Registered Dietitians
Working in Swindon