

# Nutrition Information from



## Eat 2 portions of seafood a week

**Not only is seafood delicious, it is also one of the healthiest things you can put on your plate. Here are 10 reasons why:-**

### **Great for your heart**

Doctors have known of strong links between fish and healthy hearts ever since they noticed that fish-eating Inuit populations in the Arctic had low levels of heart disease. One study has suggested that adding one portion of fish a week to your diet can cut your chances of dying from a heart attack by up to half. One reason that fish is thought to protect the heart is that eating less saturated fat and more Omega-3 can help to lower the amount of cholesterol and triglycerides in the blood - two fats that, in excess, increase the risk of heart disease. Omega-3 fats also have natural built-in anti-oxidants, which stop the hardening and damaging of artery walls. Regularly eating fish oils is also thought to reduce the risk of arrhythmia - irregular electrical activity in the heart which increases the risk of sudden heart attacks.

### **Clearing the vessels**

Eating fish regularly can improve your circulation and reduce the risk of thrombosis - painful blood clots in the arteries that can be fatal. This is because fish oils contain a lot of eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). If a diet is rich in EPA and DHA, the body is less likely to use other fats that produce powerful versions of hormone-like substances called eicosanoids.

These powerful eicosanoids make the body more likely to suffer inflammation and form blood clots. So more EPA and DHA means less risk for your circulation. Fish oils are also thought to increase the levels of nitric oxide released by the body into the blood, which helps to relax the blood vessels and improve blood flow.

### **Joint benefits**

Including fish as a regular part of a balanced diet has been shown to help the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis - a painful condition that causes joints to swell up, reducing strength and mobility. Studies also show that sufferers feel less stiff and sore in the morning if they keep their fish oil intake topped up.

Recent research has also found a link between Omega-3 fats and a slowing down in the wearing down of cartilage that leads to osteoarthritis, opening the door for more research into whether eating more fish could help prevent the disease.

### **The eyes have it**

Eating oil-rich fish regularly can also help keep eyes bright and healthy. According to a recent study, Omega-3 fatty acids can help protect the eyesight of people suffering with age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a condition caused by the deterioration of the retina which causes blurred, fuzzy or distorted vision. Scientists

recommend that people suffering with AMD should eat oil-rich fish at least twice a week, while some experts have also suggested that an Omega-3-rich diet can cut a person's risk of getting AMD by a third. Fish and shellfish are also known to be rich in retinol - a form of vitamin A that's easily absorbed into the body and helps boost night vision.

### **Essential nutrients**

Fish is high in minerals such as iodine and selenium, which keep the body running smoothly. Iodine is essential for the thyroid gland, which controls growth and metabolism, while selenium is used to make enzymes that protect cell walls from cancer-causing free radicals, and helps prevent DNA damage caused by radiation and some chemicals. Fish is also an excellent source of vitamin A, which is needed for healthy skin and eyes, and vitamin D, which is needed to help the body absorb calcium to strengthen teeth and bones. Shellfish and prawns are rich sources of zinc, which helps to develop healthy muscles and boosts the immune system. Zinc is also important for reproductive health.

### **Take a deep breath**

A number of studies have suggested that fish may help protect lungs. One found that children suffering from asthma were more likely to show an improvement when fish oils were introduced into their diet, while another suggested that children who eat lots of fish may be less likely to become asthmatic. Fish may also help to increase your 'puffing' power, with research showing that people who eat a lot of fish tending to have more powerful lungs in old age than those who eat none.

### **Brightening your outlook**

Research has highlighted links between a lack of Omega-3 fatty acids in a diet and a higher risk of depression. Countries with a fish-rich diet such as Japan have unusually low rates of seasonal affective disorder, where sufferers experience symptoms of depression in the winter months. Other studies have shown that people suffering with severe depression have lower than normal levels of the Omega-3 fats EPA and DHA.

Mums who eat a lot of fish also seem to be much less likely to suffer from post-natal depression, and keeping Omega-3 levels topped up can help people deal better with stress.

### **Your skin looks great**

Not only do Omega-3 fats help the skin protect itself against harmful effects of the environment such as UV damage, but eating lots of fish oils can also help with the symptoms of skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis, making skin feel less itchy. Fish is also a rich source of protein - an essential ingredient of collagen, which helps to hold back the years, keeping skin firm and more resistant to the effects of ageing.

### **Good for down below**

There is some evidence to suggest that a diet rich in fish oils can help to protect against serious inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD) such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. Studies of the Inuit populations in the Arctic have shown very low levels of IBD, and some scientists believe this may be thanks to Omega-3 fats. There is also some evidence that taking in more Omega-3 fats may help slow the progression of disease in some IBD sufferers, and more research is underway.

### **Boost your brainpower**

The human brain is almost 60% fat, and much of this is the Omega-3 fat DHA. Studies have shown that people who eat plenty of fish during their lives tend to experience less dementia and memory problems as they get older.

Other research has also suggested that adding more DHA to the diet of children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder can reduce their behavioural problems and improve their reading skills, while there have also been links suggested between DHA and better concentration.