

Nutrition Facts

Omega-3 Fats

Omega-3 fats provide a variety of health benefits, including lowering risk of heart disease and helping with proper nerve, brain and eye development in babies and children. Eating enough omega-3 fat during pregnancy is very important to support the healthy growth of baby's brain and tissues.

There are 3 types of omega-3 fats and you can find them in a variety of foods:

- **EPA** (eicosapentaenoic acid) – This type is found in fatty fish such as salmon, anchovies and trout
- **DHA** (docosahexaenoic acid) – This type is found in fatty fish and omega-3 eggs
- **ALA** (alpha-linolenic acid) – This type is found in ground flax seed and oil, hemp seeds, canola oil, soybean oil and walnuts

Enjoy a variety of omega-3 rich foods to get some of each type but remember that EPA and DHA are more easily used by your body.

How Much do you Need?

Gender and Age	Omega-3s / day (g)
Infants 0-12 months*	0.5
Children 1-3 years**	0.7
Children 4-8 years**	0.9
Females 9-13 years**	1.0
Males 9-13 years**	1.2
Females 14+ years**	1.1
Males 14+ years**	1.6
Pregnant Women**	1.4
Breastfeeding Women**	1.3

*As total Omega-3s

** As ALA



The average Canadian is only getting about half of the recommended amount per day!

Choose Seafood!

Canada's Food Guide recommends that Canadians, including pregnant and breastfeeding women, should eat two 75 g (2 ½ oz.) servings of fish per week. Enjoy fresh, frozen or canned fatty fish, and choose a variety such as salmon, trout, sardines, mackerel, and light tuna. These fish are low in mercury and safe to eat when you are pregnant and breastfeeding. For more information on mercury in fish visit http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/chem-chim/envIRON/mercur/merc_fish_qa-poisson_qr-eng.php#ca4.

Omega-3 Rich Foods

Fish is a great source of omega-3, but that's not the only place you can find them! Keep in mind that foods such as pasta and soymilk that claim to contain omega-3's often have ALA added to them, but in amounts too small to offer health benefits. Here is a list of the amount of omega-3's found in a variety of foods:



Food Item	EPA + DHA (g)	ALA (g)
Soybeans (1/2 cup)	0	0.29 – 0.34
Omega-3 eggs (2)	0.16 – 0.27	0.5 – 0.54
Ground Flaxseed (1 tbsp)	0	2.43
Walnuts (1/4 cup)	0	2.3
Canola Oil (1 tsp)	0	0.42
Sockeye Salmon (75 g)	0.46 – 1.27	0.05 – 0.09
Canned Anchovies	1.54	0.01
Trout (75 g)	0.66 – 0.74	0.06 – 0.14
Light tuna (75 g)	0.21	0

Omega-3 Supplements:

Try to get your omega-3's from food before turning to supplements. But if you don't like fish or if you are a vegetarian, you might need to consider an omega-3 supplement, which might be made from fish or algae oil. Make sure to talk to a Registered Dietitian, doctor or pharmacist before starting any new supplement. These supplements are safe to take when you are pregnant but limit your dose to 3000 mg (3 g) of EPA + DHA daily.

Try some of these delicious tips:

- Sprinkle ground flaxseed on cereal or yogurt
- Cook with oils such as canola and soybean oil
- Add walnuts to homemade banana muffins
- Make tuna salad with a little mayonnaise, celery and chopped apple
- Add soybeans (edamame) to your salad or eat them as a side dish.

References

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