

Omega 3 Fatty Acids

- Omega 3 is an essential fatty acid that we get from our food. Omega 3 fatty acids are comprised of EPA and DHA; both have been shown to play powerful roles in disease prevention. Unfortunately, typical American diets are low in omega 3 fatty acids. In children, omega 3 fatty acids are associated with improved immune function, brain health (including behavioral health and mood), prevention of autoimmune conditions, heart health and improvement in eczema/allergies and asthma.
- Here are the **food sources** of omega 3 fatty acids: fresh or frozen **wild caught** salmon, canned sockeye, sardines, black cod, herring, walnuts (or walnut butter), algae products, freshly ground flax and hemp seeds, pumpkin seeds, omega-3 enriched eggs.
- **Grass fed** dairy products (yogurt, milk, butter and cheese) have higher levels of omega 3 fatty acids than non grass fed products.
- Alternatively you can consider starting an **omega 3 supplement**: Preventively, for children 1-4 years of age the dose is 300-1200 mg of DHA/EPA per day. Nordic Naturals is a trusted omega 3 product. Omega 3 supplements should be **refrigerated** after opening. It is important to have a high quality omega 3 supplement because of the risk of mercury contamination.
- Notify your doctor for increased bleeding with supplementation (a rare but possible side effect).
- Cod Liver Oil (one source of omega 3s), is not recommended in children because it contains an unsafe amount of vitamin A.

Recommendations for fish intake:

1. *Eat 8-12 oz of a variety of fish per week*
 - *That's 2 or 3 servings of fish per week*
 - *For young children, given them 2 or 3 servings of fish per week with the portion right for the child's age*
2. *Choose fish lower in mercury*
 - *Many of the most commonly eaten fish are lower in mercury.*
 - *These include salmon, shrimp, tuna (light canned), tilapia, catfish and cod*
 - *Wild caught fish are preferred and contain healthier fatty acids than farm caught*
3. *Avoid 4 types of fish: tilefish from the Gulf of Mexico, shark, swordfish, and king mackerel*
 - *These 4 types are highest in mercury*
 - *Limit white (albacore) tuna to 6 ounces a week*