

## Fish Oil Supplements

### **BENEFITS**

In high doses, fish oil capsules are powerful nutritional supplements that reduce levels of triglycerides and raise HDL (good) cholesterol levels in the blood. They may increase or decrease LDL (bad) cholesterol levels, depending on your cholesterol profile.

In low doses, fish oil reduces the stickiness of blood cells (platelets), reduces inflammation in the blood vessels, and may reduce irregular beats in the heart. For these reasons, some health care providers recommend a low-dose fish oil supplement after a heart attack.

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

Always take fish oil capsules with meals. To reduce burping, store the capsules in the refrigerator or freezer and swallow them cold.

### **SIDE EFFECTS**

The following side effects may occur while you take fish oil capsules. Most of these side effects are mild and will decrease over time. They are rare in patients who take low doses of fish oils.

- Gas (belching, flatulence)
- Abdominal discomfort
- Loose stools
- Weight gain (10 calories / capsule)
- Easy bruising or bleeding

### **YOUR RECOMMENDED DOSE**

\_\_\_\_\_ milligrams (mg) of DHA +EPA per day (see labels on each brand to determine number of capsules)

or

\_\_\_\_\_ capsules of \_\_\_\_\_ per day, with meals

### **SAFETY INFORMATION**

#### **Cod liver oil is not recommended**

because it is lower in omega-3 fatty acids and large doses may provide too much vitamin A.

Some types of fish may be contaminated with mercury and PCBs, but when fish oil supplements are prepared, these dangerous elements are removed. For more detail on safety and purity of fish oil supplements, see the Consumer Union Product Review of Fish Oils at [www.consumerlab.com/results/omega3.asp](http://www.consumerlab.com/results/omega3.asp)

#### **INFORMATION FOR PHARMACISTS**

For lipid-lowering therapy, daily use of at least 4000 mg (4 grams) of omega-3 fatty acids is required. Preparations with more docosahexaenoic (DHA) and less eicosapentaenoic (EPA) acid are preferred.

Following a heart attack, daily use of 1000 mg (1 gram) of omega-3 fatty acids is recommended.

A chart comparing common fish oil preparations is found on page 2.

## Examples of Fish Oil Supplements

Product/ Manufacturer	DHA mg	EPA mg	Servings per container	Price/ Bottle *	Amount/day for 4000 mg	Cost/month for 4000 mg/day	Amount/day for 1000 mg	Cost/month for 1000 mg/day
Advanced Nutrition Technology Super EPA 2000 capsules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UW Hospital Pharmacy 600 Highland Avenue Madison, WI 608-263-1280</li> <li>• Malott's Pharmacy 3506 Monroe St. Madison, WI 608-238-3106</li> <li>• Advanced Nutrition Technology Call 1-800-624-6543 8 AM- 5 PM PST</li> </ul>	310	500	90	\$39.95  \$38.95  \$36.00 plus shipping	5 caps	1.7 bottles  \$67.91  \$66.21  \$61.20 plus shipping	1 cap	\$13.32  \$12.98  \$12.00 plus shipping
Carlson Super Omega-3 capsules	200	300	100	\$17.00	8 caps	2.4 bottles = \$40.80	2 caps	\$10.20
Coromega orange fish oil emulsion, packets	230	500	90	\$30.00	5½ packets	1.8 boxes = \$54.00	1½ packets	\$15.00
Lovaza capsules <i>Prescription only</i>	375	465	60	\$70.50	4 caps	2 bottles = \$141.00	1 cap	\$35.25
Nordic Naturals Pro-Omega capsules	225	325	120	\$39.95	7 caps	1.75 bottles = \$69.91	2 caps	\$19.98
Nordic Naturals Pro-Omega liquid, ½ tsp=1 serving	625	875	4 oz bottle (48 ½ tsp servings)	\$33.95	1 ½ tsp (3 servings)	1.9 bottles = \$64.50	1/3 teaspoon	\$14.15
O3mega enteric coated capsules	120	180	60	\$9.99	13 caps	6.5 bottles = \$64.93	3 caps	\$14.98
Walgreens enteric coated 21 <sup>st</sup> century capsules	120	180	90	\$7.99	13 caps	4.3 bottles = \$34.35	3 caps	\$7.99
Walgreens Finest Fish Oil Capsules	120	180	100	\$5.99	13 caps	3.9 bottles = \$23.36	3 caps	\$5.39

\*Many fish oil products are available via the Internet and prices vary widely. The prices listed here are intended as a general guide.

For a Consumer Union Product Review of fish oils, go to [www.consumerlab.com/results/omega3.asp](http://www.consumerlab.com/results/omega3.asp)

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