

UK NEWS

OMEGA 3 IS THE SECRET OF LONG LIFE



Scientists say Omega 3 should be taken daily by Britons

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By Dana Gloger

EATING oily fish can help ensure a long life as it slashes the risk of heart failure by a third, scientists have discovered.

As a result, they say the fatty acid found in fish oil, omega 3, should now be taken daily by everyone in Britain.

Oily fish has long been known to help those with existing heart problems, but just 500mg a day – the equivalent of two three-ounce portions a week – could also cut the risk for healthy people.

The “compelling” new evidence could reduce heart attack deaths in the UK by up to 30 per cent – without a need for extra medication.

Heart disease is still the country’s biggest killer and scientists at the Ochsner Medical Center in New Orleans looked back at 30 years of research.

They say people with existing heart problems should take “at least 800 to 1,000mg” of omega 3 each day – the amount found in three to four 3oz portions of oily fish a week.

Half that amount of fish would provide enough omega 3 for healthy people – the equivalent of one supplement capsule.

Although the substance is considered an “essential fatty acid”, omega 3 is not produced naturally by the body, and therefore it can only be obtained through diet or supplements. The Food Standards Agency recommends mackerel, tuna and

herring as the best source of the oil, which according to previous studies can also protect against strokes and cancer.

But it has previously sounded warnings about eating too much oily fish, claiming that it can contain low levels of pollutants that might build up in the body.

Experts say there is no harm in men and most women eating four portions of fish a week, but girls and women who might later have a baby and those who are pregnant or breast-feeding should limit their intake to two portions a week.

Dr Carl Lavie, who led the study which was published in the Journal of the American College of Cardiology, said: "This isn't just hype.



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Chief Executive Officer
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"We now have tremendous and compelling evidence from very large studies ... that demonstrates the protective benefits of omega 3 fish oil in multiple aspects of preventive cardiology. "And we are talking about a very safe and relatively inexpensive therapy."

Last night the findings were hailed as a true breakthrough in tackling heart disease, which kills 200,000 people a year in the UK. Around 275,000 Britons suffer heart attacks each year. Nutritionist Carina Norris said: "This is great – very welcome research. It shows that omega 3 is one of the closest things to a true superfood.

"It is involved in so many areas of health, especially the heart and brain, and it is really good news that they have now found it can also reduce the risk of heart attacks in healthy people as well as those with existing heart problems. Those who don't like fish can just take a supplement instead."

The British Heart Foundation welcomed the research last night and Linda Main, dietician at the charity Heart UK, said: "These findings could be a radical way of cutting heart attacks."

But she warned that adding omega 3 to a diet needed to be coupled with overall healthier eating.