

OmegaMatters

Premium Supplements for Optimum Health

Spring 2008

Exclusive
Reader Offer
Half Price offer on OmegaFlex*
see back cover for more details

Hot Topic

Low-fat products don't help obesity

Fat has long been cast as the dietary bad guy; viewed with particular caution by medical health organisations, government bodies, athletes and dieters alike, it has been labeled as the primary cause of obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes – not to mention its links with poor mental function and even certain cancers. This is evident in the obsession with low-fat diets which prevailed until very recently, and the availability and vast range of low-fat products on supermarket shelves, more often than not hailed as 'healthy' options.

As the most calorie-loaded nutrient gram for gram, it's no surprise that excessive dietary intake of fat-rich foods may encourage the development of obesity and cardiovascular disease. Excessive intake of the wrong fats can clog up your blood vessels and place an extra burden on the heart. But in spite of low-fat foods becoming increasingly popular – Britain hasn't got any slimmer, and related health conditions continue to rise – in reality the situation is far more complex. Although the NHS and media continue imploring people to cut fat out of their diet, low-fat is not the answer to no fat.

When it comes to what's

good for you, not all fats are equal. Owing to advances in medical understanding we now know that it's not so much a case of how much fat you eat, but what types of fat your diet is made up of. We outline here the good fat/bad fat story so that you can adjust your diet in favour of certain fats which will make all the difference to your health.

The bad guys

Some fats are inherently bad for our health – so much so, that the forward-thinking major retailers are working towards removing all trans fats from their products. So what exactly makes certain fats so harmful? Saturated and trans fats (found in animal products and certain vegetable oils) have a direct effect upon blood cholesterol levels which affect our risk of cardiovascular disease and other illnesses. There are in fact two types of cholesterol in the blood: LDL (bad) cholesterol blocks up blood vessels and forms a plaque, leading to the hardening and narrowing of artery walls; HDL (good) cholesterol, removes LDL cholesterol

from the blood and takes it to the liver for excretion from the body.

Trans fats (or hydrogenated fats, found in many processed snack foods, commercially fried foods and many margarines) are even more potent in their influence on cholesterol than saturated fats; whilst saturated fats raise both LDL and HDL cholesterol (an overall negative effect), trans fats raise LDL cholesterol and decrease HDL – especially harmful to one's health.

Friendly fats?

Unsaturated fats, in contrast, do the exact opposite of trans fats, and play an important role in maintaining our mental and physical health. Lowering LDL in the blood and also raising HDL, fats such as those found in olive oil, nuts and fish are typically found in the Mediterranean Diet, long associated with vitality and longevity. Another beneficial property of fats, they slow the release of carbohydrates into the blood, helping to eliminate "sugar



highs" as well as the corresponding crash after the glucose is burned off. Ever noticed that post-lunch lethargy when you've eaten a high-carb meal? Simple carbohydrates typically found in bread and pasta break down quickly, flooding the body with glucose, at which point the body releases insulin to remove the glucose and store it in the liver for later use, resulting in the post-sugar crash. Eating carbohydrates with fat or protein, however, will slow down your digestion so the energy lasts longer – for mental and physical stamina. Athletes improve their performance and diabetics

continued overleaf

igennus

If you have any questions, suggestions or ideas please contact us at
igennus, St John's Innovation Centre, Cowley Road, Cambridge, CB4 0WS
or e-mail info@igennus.com Telephone: 44 (0) 845 13 00 424

www.igennus.com

Hot Topic - Low-fat products don't help obesity

become healthier when they switch to a diet higher in certain kinds of fat and protein and lower in calories. In addition, there are certain fatty acids which we require for optimal health which can only be found in certain foods.

It may seem a strange concept to view fat as a beneficial nutrient, but if you can learn to select the right foods and replace bad fats with good fats in your diet, you are likely to do your health a world of good. Of course, this doesn't mean that you no longer need to watch how much you're eating – calories still count. Nuts such as walnuts and almonds contain important omega fats and minerals, but are also high in

calories, so it's important not to make the mistake of seeing healthy food as a licence to binge.

Where we go wrong

There is a tendency to make certain mistakes when cutting down fat in the diet. The problem often lies in cutting down total fat, rather than replacing the bad fats in the diet with the good fats. Be careful you don't make these mistakes:

1. Miss out on the 'good' fats.

Foods like avocados, nuts and fish contain essential oils known as fatty acids. In fact the body cannot subsist without a plentiful supply of the right fats, which are required at the most complex cellular level. Omega-3 fatty acids, for example, perform several important functions in the brain, such as providing the building blocks for cell membranes in the phospholipid layer, assisting electrical cell messaging, and balancing neurotransmitters which can affect memory, concentration and mood. Different types of good fats are also beneficial for the cardiovascular system, such as omega-3 and omega-9 fats. EPA, from oily fish, for example, removes triglycerides (fatty deposits) from the blood, which helps to maintain more flexible, elastic arteries for better blood flow. This heart-saving nutrient also reduces the stickiness of blood platelets, decreasing the likelihood of blood clots,

heart attack and stroke.

Good fats are also essential for the uptake of fat-soluble vitamins and minerals; if we cut down all fats then we risk becoming deficient in essential nutrients which support many other physiological processes.

2. Cut out the wrong bad fats.

Whilst many people recognise the need to avoid saturated fats, they often avoid all meat and dairy products, which are important sources of other nutrients including the omega-6 CLA, an ingredient in many weight-loss products, owing to its fat-zapping and muscle-promoting properties. Lean white meat and moderate amounts of dairy are good sources of proteins and vitamins, so they're ideal to include as part of a healthy diet.

3. Overlook other hidden 'nasties'.

Seduced by low-fat labels, we're not doing ourselves any favours when opting for these seemingly healthy options. In order to cut fat from foods, manufacturers tend to make up for the loss of taste by increasing the amounts of sugar and refined starch, particularly in processed foods. Low-fat foods such as yoghurts are frequently high in sugar – empty calories which, unless burned, will eventually be stored as fat. It's a good idea to read labels carefully before you buy.



Did you know?

Being fit not only helps make us look good on the outside but it also helps on the inside! Our heart beats an average of 100,000 times per day and in that time, it pumps more than 4,300 gallons of blood throughout the entire body. Yet in Britain we don't seem to take good care of our hearts; approximately 2.6 million people have some form of coronary heart disease, and this alarming figure is on the increase.

The British Heart Foundation believes 80% of coronary heart conditions are preventable. The major cause of most cardiovascular disease is a build-up of fatty deposits within the arterial wall. Lifestyle factors associated with developing cardiovascular diseases include smoking, poor diet, high salt intake, sedentary lifestyle, obesity, high blood pressure and high cholesterol – all of which are likely to shorten our lifespan considerably if we choose to ignore the warnings. Following the well-known principle, "prevention is better than cure", it only takes small lifestyle adjustments which can make a dramatic difference to potential 'at risk' groups for cardiovascular disease and obesity.

Whilst losing those extra pounds and increasing fitness levels go a long way towards lowering the risk of heart attack, supplementing can play an important role too. Omega-3 fatty acids help to improve the cardiovascular

system by directly addressing the greatest heart attack risk-factors; preventing blood clots, reducing blood triglycerides, decreasing the growth rate of atherosclerotic plaque, lowering blood pressure and improving circulation are just a few of the benefits frequently cited in clinical studies on heart attack and stroke patients, as well as the wider population.

Why not try...

OmegaForce has been formulated to provide the body with the optimum combination of omega-3, -6 & -9 fatty acids. The multitude of benefits offered by this blend makes OmegaForce the perfect choice for maintaining and improving mental and physical fitness. Ideal for cardiovascular health, this synergistic combination of ingredients helps to address the biggest risk-factors for cardiac problems, whilst offering a multitude of health-giving properties.



Top 5 fat-busting foods



1. CLA is a naturally occurring omega-6 fatty acid, which has been shown in research and clinical tests to inhibit the body's mechanism

for storing fat. Together with a sensible diet and exercise, CLA may help to reduce body fat whilst retaining lean muscle mass. Try OmegaFlex!

2. Olive oil contains the omega-9 oleic acid. Famous for being synonymous with the Mediterranean diet, olive oil is



believed to optimise metabolism and decrease blood sugar levels, thereby keeping those hunger pangs at bay.



3. Green tea. Rich in antioxidants and thought to provide a protective effect against cancer, green tea is also now reckoned to boost the body's

natural fat-burning mechanisms.

Scientists have discovered a group of polyphenols called catechins which affect fat accumulation and cholesterol levels. In order to stimulate its calorie-burning properties, you'll need to drink at least 4 cups of green tea each day.

4. Water – so effective and yet so simple. Try aiming for 8 glasses of water daily; women especially can carry kilos of extra weight in water retention caused by a build-up of toxins, salt and alcohol.



By drinking plenty of water you'll flush these toxins from the body, and restore the correct sodium balance, preventing future bloating. You may find you sleep better, too.

5. Beetroot is a strong diuretic that focuses on the liver and kidneys. It helps to reduce bloating body fat by cleansing cells



of fatty deposits. Beetroot also contains chlorine that helps to stimulate the lymph system, which aids detoxification.

Research Update

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) patients decrease medication after daily dose of fish oil

Consuming omega-3 fatty acids as part of the daily diet could reduce the need for painkillers, report researchers at Dundee University. The findings from the study published in the journal *Rheumatology*, are a welcome revelation, in light of the mounting concerns over the adverse effects of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as Ibuprofen. Some of these drugs have been associated with gastrointestinal toxicity, high blood pressure and a greater risk of cardiovascular disease.

The double-blind, placebo-controlled study involved 97 RA patients who were given either cod liver oil or a placebo. The researchers found that supplementation with 2.2g long-chain omega-3 fatty acids could result in a reduction in medication by up to 30 per cent after nine months.

An estimated seven million adults in the UK suffer from long-term health problems associated with arthritis, says the Arthritis Research Campaign (www.arc.org.uk), with approximately 350,000 people thought to be suffering from RA – the incurable form of the disease originating in autoimmune problems which bring about painful inflammation in the joints. But there's good news – sufferers may be able to slow the progression of the disease by taking omega-3 supplements. The benefits of these natural anti-inflammatory substances are well documented; earlier studies have suggested that as well as reducing inflammation, certain omega-3 fats actually switch off the collagen-degrading enzymes which break down joint cartilage. Unlike NSAIDs, omega-3 is able to be taken long-term, providing anti-

inflammatory and collagen-supporting properties – offering a two-pronged defence against the harmful deterioration of joints affected by RA.

Superior in terms of purity, concentration and efficacy, our pure EPA omega-3 supplements offer significant benefits over the clinical application of cod liver oil. Above all, the removal of DHA ensures that EPA is more bioavailable in the body, promoting the production of anti-inflammatory eicosanoids.

Why not try...

OmegaFlex is a patented and highly concentrated formulation of omega-3, -6 & -9 long-chain fatty acids, glucosamine hydrochloride and botanical triterpenes. This combination of carefully selected natural ingredients works synergistically to nourish the joints, keeping them lubricated and functioning properly.



Ask our Expert

I am currently pregnant with my second child, and due to give birth in June. A member of my antenatal class recently mentioned hearing that omega fats may help to reduce the risk of suffering from postnatal depression which I suffered after my firstborn child. Is there anything I can do to minimise the chances of this happening again?

Suffering from postnatal depression following childbirth is not uncommon, with figures suggesting that around ten per cent of new mothers suffer from the baby blues.

Studies indicate that depressive episodes are linked to nutritional deficiencies which occur after pregnancy, particularly low levels of omega-3 fatty acids, and co-factors such as magnesium and zinc. The baby's developing brain relies heavily on fatty acids in order to mature and



scavenges the necessary fats directly from the mother's own 'stores'. Unless the mother's diet is supplemented with essential fats, the all-important supply of bioavailable long-chain fatty acids can become depleted during pregnancy and breastfeeding, sometimes quite severely.

Over the course of a typical pregnancy, the mother's brain will shrink as it nourishes the developing foetus. In cases of multiple births, or pregnancies in quick succession, however, the situation can become quite severe; as well as the mother being at greater risk of postnatal depression, the child is also more likely to experience developmental and behavioural problems in early life.

But there is good news – studies show that nourishing your body with the right foods (particularly omega-3s) both before and after the birth of your child can reduce this likelihood. The omega-3 fatty acid EPA found in oily fish is nature's most effective antidepressant. As well as stabilising mood by restoring levels of the mood-enhancing neurotransmitter serotonin, EPA is converted into natural sleep-mediators, promoting deeper and more nourishing sleep, which is often disturbed in cases of depression.

If you enjoy eating fish, try opting for the oily types (such as anchovies and mackerel) but do take note that the Food Standards Agency (FSA) advises pregnant women to limit their intake to

two portions of oily fish a week. This alone won't provide the necessary levels of omega-3s to get you through your pregnancy, so do consider a purified EPA supplement.

Why not try...



Vegepa is an ultra-pure formulation of omega-3 and -6 fatty acids, providing highly concentrated EPA, organic virgin evening primrose oil and botanical triterpenes. Just two capsules daily will provide the required nourishment to maintain healthy levels of the mother's nutritional stores. What's more, the mood-balancing natural properties of EPA will encourage restful sleep in your child and may promote a calm and contented disposition!

If you have any questions you'd like to ask our nutrition expert, please write in to Dr Nina. If your letter is published, we'll send you two free tubs of Vegepa. Please send your questions to: Dr Nina, Igennus, St John's Innovation Centre, Cowley Road, Cambridge, CB4 0WS or e-mail info@igennus.com



Exclusive Reader Offer

Half Price

OmegaFlex*

Quote **ST22** when placing your order via our order line Tel: **0845 1300 424**

*Offer expires 30th June 2008. Maximum 20 units per customer. Not valid in conjunction with any other offer.