

Fish Oil (Omega-3)

Common ingredients: EPA and DHA | Oils And Fatty Acids

What Is It?

Fish oil contains omega-3 fats called EPA and DHA. These fats help cells function. Supplements are sold as capsules or liquids. Algae oil can provide DHA and sometimes EPA without fish. [1]

Why People Take It - And How Strong the Research Is

High triglycerides | STRONG EVIDENCE FOR PRESCRIPTION PRODUCTS. Triglycerides are fats in the blood. Prescription omega-3 medicines can lower high levels. Store-bought fish oil is not a substitute for the prescribed product or dose. [1,2]

Preventing heart attacks | DEPENDS ON THE PRODUCT AND PERSON. Ordinary fish oil is not a proven heart-attack prevention treatment for everyone. Certain prescription products help selected patients. Benefits from eating fish should not be assumed to apply to capsules. [1,2]

Rheumatoid arthritis | POSSIBLE ADD-ON BENEFIT. Some studies suggest reduced need for pain medicines when omega-3s are added to usual treatment. They do not replace arthritis care. [1]

What Should I Look For On The Label?

Check the amounts of EPA and DHA per serving, not just the total fish oil. A capsule labeled 1,000 mg fish oil does not necessarily contain 1,000 mg EPA plus DHA. Cod liver oil also contains vitamins A and D, which can add to other supplements. [1]

Side Effects And Important Safety Concerns

Possible effects include a fishy taste, burping, heartburn, nausea or diarrhea. High doses can increase the risk of atrial fibrillation, an irregular heartbeat, and may increase bleeding risk. Tell your clinician about blood thinners, planned surgery, fish allergies or a history of heart rhythm problems. [1,2]

Do not start high-dose treatment on your own. Ask your pharmacist to check the product and dose against your medicines and other supplements. [1,2]

Questions To Ask Your Doctor Or Pharmacist

Do I need fish oil for a specific reason? Should I use a prescription product? How much EPA and DHA does this serving contain? Do my heart rhythm history or medicines change the risks?

Evidence labels describe research, not a guarantee of personal benefit or safety.

Where To Find Additional Information

1. NIH ODS - Omega-3 Fatty Acids: [consumer guide](#)

2. NIH NHLBI - Omega-3s: [heart benefits and risks](#)

Sources checked October 17, 2026. This guide is for learning, not for diagnosing or treating an illness. Talk with your healthcare provider before changing prescribed treatment.