



Essential Fatty Acids

What are EFAs?

You've probably heard about essential fatty acids (EFAs) in the news, but what are they and what makes them essential? Any essential nutrient is one that the body cannot produce so it must be consumed within the diet or through supplementation. EFAs are comprised of Omega-3, Omega-6, and Omega-9 fatty acids, which are differentiated according to their chemical structures. The typical American diet is much higher in Omega-6 fatty acids than Omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3 fatty acids are known to reduce inflammatory states such as arthritis, allergies, asthma, psoriasis, and eczema. Depression, ADHD, Autism, and bipolar disorder may also improve with EFA supplementation. The benefits of Omega-3 fatty acids are well established, but eating foods high in Omega-3 fatty acids is often difficult. Most people choose to get their Omega-3 fatty acids through supplements.

What do EFA's do?

EFAs are crucial for proper cell development. The cells of the body are constantly dividing and forming new cells. Fatty acids, especially Omega-3 fatty acids, are incorporated into the membranes of cells. They lubricate the cell, improve flexibility and communication among cells. Cell membranes allow waste materials to pass out of the cell and allow nutrients to move into the cell. When the body does not have adequate levels of Omega-3 fatty acids, it uses components that look similar to Omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-6 and Omega-9 can be incorporated into cell membranes if Omega-3 levels are inadequate. This substitution disrupts the delicate balance of the cell membrane. The cell membrane can become more rigid and less permeable to the movement of materials through the cell membrane, which can lead to a host of health concerns including increased systemic inflammation, interruption of neural electrical impulses, decreased functionality of organs and poor tissue repair.

Who should supplement with EFA's?

Almost anyone could benefit from EFA supplementation since they are rarely balanced through regular diet. EFA's have proven to be especially helpful for those suffering from:

- Inflammatory conditions
- Cardiovascular disease
- Depression
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Stress
- Certain types of cancer
- Skin disorders

Sources of EFA's

Omega-6s are found in safflower, soybean, and corn oil, which are in many processed foods. American's increased intake of processed and fast foods has resulted in higher levels of Omega-6s in our diets.

The highest concentration of Omega-3s is found in cold water fatty fish, such as mackerel, salmon, herring, sardines and tuna. Precursors to Omega-3s are also found in plant sources such as flaxseeds, walnuts and leafy green vegetables, however our bodies are not always efficient at converting these precursors into a usable form of Omega-3s.

It is possible to get adequate Omega-3 levels by including fatty fish in the diet on a regular basis (at least 2 times per week). However there are some concerns with regular fish consumption. Many fish available at American markets are raised in farms and fed fishmeal. They do not contain the same levels of Omega-3 fatty acids found in wild fish. Fish in the wild consume algae, which is rich in Omega-3 fatty acids. These fats are incorporated into the fatty tissues of the fish. So why not just eat wild fish to get your Omega-3 fatty acids? Some ocean fish may contain dangerous levels of mercury. People who consume contaminated fish can absorb mercury. Small amounts of mercury from consuming fish occasionally do not pose a great threat. However, mercury can accumulate to toxic levels in people consuming several servings of fish each week.

For regular Omega-3 consumption, fish oil supplementation can offer a viable solution. Since fish oils can be fragile and unstable, consumers should look for high quality oils to avoid products that may be contaminated with pesticides and toxins or products that may have oxidized or gone rancid. We are careful to research the manufacturing methods of the EFA supplement lines we carry, and stand behind the products we offer.

EFA supplements we carry

Kirkman

Cod Liver Oil in liquid form (regular and lemon – lime flavor)

Nordic Naturals

ProDHA caps – Omega 3 fish oil (strawberry flavored), 500 mg per capsule

ProEFA caps – Omega 3 fish oil with organic borage oil (Lemon flavored), 1000 mg per capsule

ProOmega caps – High concentration Omega 3 fish oil ((Lemon flavored), 1000 mg per capsule

DHA Junior chewable cap – Omega 3 supplement for two years and up (Strawberry flavored), 250 mg per capsule

Coromega

Omega 3 daily packets (orange flavored)

Phytopharmica

Eskimo 3 caps – Fish oil (lime/rosemary flavored), 1.5g fish oil per 3 capsules

Clinical Nutrients Flax oil caps – Flax, pumpkin, and borage oil

Contact us to learn more about our products and services.

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