



Canned salmon good for omega-3s

We love making baked salmon, especially because it's so good for you. But it is expensive. Recently I've been tempted to try canned salmon. Does it have the same health benefits from omega-3 fatty acids?

Canned salmon can be a great, economical alternative to fresh salmon. The amount of omega-3s varies widely, but you can rest assured that you'll be getting more heart-healthy omega-3s with canned salmon than with no salmon at all.

In a 2006 study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, Harvard University researchers determined that eating 2 grams of omega-3 fatty acids from fish such as salmon each week reduces the risk of dying from heart disease by 36 percent. That's just one reason why health organizations recommend eating fish twice a week.

The amount of omega-3s in a food often isn't listed on labels, but you can get a general idea by looking at the polyunsaturated fat content, or, if that's not listed, at the total fat content. Canned salmon with a higher level of polyunsaturated fat, also known as a "good" fat, is likely to have higher levels of the omega-3s you're looking for: EPA (short for eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid).

You can generally count on about 1.0 to 1.3 grams of these two types of omega-3s in a three-ounce serving of canned salmon. That's only about half of what you might get in the same amount of fresh salmon fillets, but it's still a significant amount.

Once you start taking a good look at what's available, you might be surprised at the variety of canned salmon. Many types are canned with skin and bone. Though the bone, which becomes soft and chewable from the canning process, adds a significant amount of calcium per serving, it's also a turn-off for some people. Luckily, skinless and boneless varieties are readily available. The best advice is to try different types for different recipes and stick with whatever you prefer.

Some other hints:

- Look for salmon packed in water. If salmon (or tuna, for that matter) is packed in oil, you'll lose some omega-3s with the oil when you drain the can.

- Watch out for salmon that's been smoked or otherwise processed in a way that adds a lot of sodium.

Compare sodium content on the labels and try the kinds with the lowest amount first.

For more information about fish and seafood from the Food and Drug Administration, see <http://bit.ly/FDAfish>.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu.



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By Martha Filipic

614-292-9833

filipic.3@osu.edu

Editor:

This column was reviewed by Alma Simmons, an Ohio State University dietetic intern in the Department of Human Nutrition, College of Education and Human Ecology.

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2021 Coffey Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1044
614-292-2011

208 Research Services
Building
1680 Madison Ave.
Wooster, OH 44691-4096
330-263-3780

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