



## Start with fish to increase omega-3s

### The more I hear about omega-3 fatty acids, the more I want them in my diet. Which foods are highest in omega-3s?

Omega-3 fatty acids do have many health benefits, and more are being discovered every day. Besides being good for the cardiovascular system, they've been linked with decreasing the risk of age-related macular degeneration — the leading cause of blindness in older adults — as well as a lower risk of dementia, Alzheimer's disease, and other types of age-related cognitive decline.

Some foods high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as agutuk (also known as Alaskan ice cream made with seal oil) are not usually stocked at the corner grocery store. But you can find listings of foods high in omega-3 foods on several websites that take information from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Nutrient Database. One such site is <http://www.nutritiondata.com>. Just click on "Foods by Nutrient," and search for foods highest in total omega-3 fats.

But first, you should know that it is possible to get too much omega-3. Unfortunately, there's no standard recommendation on minimum or maximum amounts — check with your doctor before increasing your intake to be sure you don't go overboard. For people who already have heart disease, the American Heart Association recommends 1,000 milligrams a day of the two main

types of omega-3 fats found in fish, EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexenoic acid). The third type of omega-3, ALA (alpha-linoleic acid), is found primarily in seeds and nuts. On average, Americans consume much more ALA than they do EPA and DHA, but there's less evidence for health benefits of ALA.

That said, to increase the level of omega-3s in your diet, you might want to focus on fish. Here's how much omega-3 fatty acids are in 3-ounce (cooked) servings of:

- Salmon, more than 1,900 milligrams.
- Herring, nearly 1,900 milligrams.
- Fresh bluefin tuna, about 1,400 milligrams.
- Wild rainbow trout, about 1,000 milligrams.

Also, 3 ounces of white tuna canned in water and drained has 800 milligrams of omega-3 fatty acids. And, a 3.75-ounce can of sardines, canned in oil and drained, has about 1,400 milligrams.

Other types of fatty fish — swordfish, tilefish (golden bass or golden snapper), shark and King mackerel — are also very high in omega-3 fatty acids, but they also tend to be high in mercury, so it's wise to limit the amount of these types of fish that you consume.

*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](mailto:filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu).*



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
EXTENSION

OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH  
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

---

For the week of  
Dec. 12, 2010

---

By Martha Filipic

614-292-9833

[filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu)

#### Editor:

This column was reviewed by Julie Kennel, nutrition program manager for Ohio State University Extension in the Department of Human Nutrition in the College of Education and Human Ecology.

---

#### Communications and Technology

#### News and Marketing

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

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

Ohio State University Extension embraces human diversity and is committed to ensuring that all research and related educational programs are available to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or veteran status. This statement is in accordance with United States Civil Rights Laws and the USDA. Keith L. Smith, Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Agricultural Administration and Director, Ohio State University Extension TDD No. 800-589-8292 (Ohio only) or 614-292-1868