



### **What is the difference between the Omega 3, 6 and 9 fatty acids?**

This is a question I get quite frequently. While each are important and have their own health benefits, when it comes to choosing supplementation, here is some information you may find helpful.

First, let's get a bit of a background on what these fatty acids are. In a nutshell they are healthy fats that have anti-inflammatory properties and are used for multiple purposes in the body. The benefits range from skin, hair, brain, nerve cell, immune system, and heart health. These omega fatty acids do not get stored as fat in the body and can help us to lose weight by replacing the saturated fat content in our diet.

The polyunsaturated fats Omega 3 and 6 are Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs). Essential means that we must obtain them from our diet in order to get them into the body. Omega 9 (Oleic Acid) on the other hand, a monounsaturated fat, is not 'essential' because our bodies are able to make it on its own. Supplementing with omega 9 may not be entirely necessary unless advised by your healthcare practitioner as deficiency is unlikely. Instead some great food sources of omega 9 are avocados, almonds, cashews, and olive oil. People who eat a traditional Mediterranean diet high in olive oil typically show a lower risk of developing rheumatoid arthritis, heart disease and some types of cancer.

Omega 6 (Linoleic Acid) itself is very widespread in the North American diet as found in grains, nuts, legumes, sunflower, peanut and sesame oils. This makes being deficient in it unlikely. In fact, under some circumstances too much omega 6 when combined with too much saturated fat and too little omega 3 healthy fat can indirectly turn the Linoleic Acid into another derivative called Arachadonic Acid (AA). AA is pro-inflammatory, blood clotting and can lead to high blood pressure. Like omega 9, unless advised by your health care practitioner, supplementing with omega 6 may also be unnecessary and a waste of money.

Omega 3 (Alpha-Linolenic-Acid) on the other hand provides a different story. This is where North Americans really lack in our diets. While you can obtain omega 3 from flaxseed and hemp oil, dark leafy greens and nuts and seeds, your best source of Omega 3 can be obtained from fish. There are 2 omega 3 derivatives called EPA and DHA which have incredible health benefits. Approximately 30% of our brains are made up of DHA omega 3 fatty acid making it important for brain function and overall health. EPA is beneficial for circulation and functions as a blood thinner thereby increasing flow to the heart and brain. Fish oils are often used in many nutritional protocols such as depression, memory loss, AD(H)D, eczema, and arthritis to name a few.

Ultimately if you are going to supplement with a fatty acid, omega 3 fish oils are your best bet. If you are a vegan or vegetarian then supplementing with flaxseed oil would certainly be a nice alternative.



### HEALTHY COOKING

#### Which oils are safe to cook with?

So many recipes call for cooking with oil, is this really the healthiest way of cooking? Unfortunately, but predictably, the answer is 'no'. Polyunsaturated fats such as flaxseed, sunflower, safflower, and soybean oils have some wonderful health benefits when consumed raw, but 'oxidize' when exposed to the smoking, bubbling high heat from the frying pan. Structurally they are not robust oils that can handle high heats and the resulting oxidation causes them to lose their nutritional value and create free radicals which can attack brain, heart, and lung tissue. More robust fats to cook with are ghee and butter, coconut, palm, peanut and sesame oils. Olive oil on low– medium heat appears to be quite safe as well. More often steaming your veggies or sautéing your food in a low sodium soup stock is really ideal. Here is a delicious recipe below.

### LET'S EAT

#### Ginger and Garlic Veggie Stirfry

##### Ingredients

- ½ TBSP of minced ginger
- 2 large garlic cloves, minced
- 4 TBSP of low sodium chicken/vegetable stock **OR** 2 TBSP sesame oil
- 1 cup chopped Portobello mushrooms
- 1 onion, chopped
- ½ cup sliced carrots
- ½ cup each of sliced celery and snow peas
- ½ cup sliced or whole almonds
- ½ cup red peppers
- 1 cup broccoli
- Can of bamboo shoots (optional)
- 2 TBSP of Teriyaki sauce or gluten free BRAGG Aminos



##### Directions

1. Heat the soup stock on high heat to a boil (or sesame oil if preferred on low-med heat) then add the garlic, ginger and onions.
2. Once the onions are translucent (after about 2 minutes) then you can add the remaining vegetables and cook on medium heat until crisp, not soft. Stir often.

*Place over quinoa or brown rice and drizzle with fresh lemon and teriyaki or BRAGG soy sauce.*