



The Spinal Column

The Fat War Myths – Part 4 of 4

By Dr. Rupi Mitha, B.Sc., N.D.



We've all seen them. All those bottles of Essential Fatty Acids lined up around the health food store. We hear about them on TV, radio and through various health magazines. Omega-3? Omega-6? Flax? Borage? Evening Primrose Oil? What's up with these fats and how could they be good for us? Hopefully, some of these questions will be answered for you in the next few minutes it takes for you to read this article.

Essential Fatty Acids (EFA's) or Vitamin F as it is sometimes called are polyunsaturated fats which cannot be manufactured by our bodies; therefore we must seek them from food sources.

These fatty acids play an active role in maintaining normal growth and development of every cell, muscle and organ in our bodies. They also play a very important role in making a key group of hormones called Prostaglandins. Prostaglandins are produced by the body and depending on the ratio of good oils to bad oils can be responsible for either inflammation and/or antiinflammation.

Typically, EFA's are divided into 2 groups: Omega-3 and Omega-6. Omega-3's include algalinolenic acid, stearidonic acid and 2 others known as EPA and DHA. Algalinolenic acid is found in foods such as flaxseed oil, canola oil, soybeans, walnuts and dark green leafy vegetables. Stearidonic acid is found in rarer nuts and seeds including black currant seed. EPA and DHA are found

in coldwater fish such as salmon, trout, tuna and good old cod-liver oil. It is these properties in fish which make them known as brain-food. Omega-3 Fatty acids have been traditionally used to treat a variety of nervous system issues such as memory loss, ADHD (Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and even Multiple Sclerosis.

Omega-6 Fatty acids are more likely to be found in the North American diet. Sources include olive oil, safflower oil, almonds, hempseed, flaxseed oil and evening primrose oil. Gamma-linoleic acid and arachadonic acid (found in meats and other animal products) are the two forms mostly found.

A ratio of Omega-3 and Omega-6 Fatty acids is optimal for ideal health. A ratio of a minimum of 1:3 is desired. At present, due to the high amounts of animal products in the North American diet the ratio is 1:40. This ratio represents a severe imbalance of EFA's, one which can contribute to ill health. High amounts of Omega-6 fatty acids can lead to inflammation, poor circulation and eventually contribute to serious disease processes such as atherosclerosis and diabetes. Due to this imbalance, many health care practitioners will encourage their patients to consume higher amounts of Omega-3 fatty acids in their diet in an effort to balance out the ratio.

Remember, all fats are not created equally.

TFA's are responsible for the incredible high incidence of increased cholesterol, high blood pressure and hormonal disorders found throughout our society. TFA's are found in all fried foods, highlyprocessed foods and any foods that are quick and easy to prepare. Yes, they are convenient but at what cost? No doubt, you'll agree that your health is worth the extra 20 minutes it takes to make real oatmeal.

Ultimately the goal is to increase the good fats in your diet while decreasing the bad fats. It all comes down to common sense food choices. Eat lots of fresh veggies and fruits, increase your intake of cold-water fish, decrease your intake of highly-processed foods and decrease your saturated fat intake. Try cooking some tofu, drizzle a little flaxseed oil on your salad, buy that fresh trail mix of nuts to munch on throughout the day.

For those of you that are interested in shedding a few pounds, it is these fats that help your body receive proper messages so that your hormones can work for you, not

against you. As a side-effect, you'll find your metabolism increase, your skin will start to appear and feel healthier, You may also notice that you are better able to digest your food, your cravings may decrease and you don't feel as "drained" as you used to.

Our fore-fathers were not dumb. When grandma gave you cod-liver oil she knew what she was doing. She was feeding your brain and body. In our attempt to become more "modern" we have forgotten the meaning of *good wholesome food*. We strive for that convenient quick, updated version of a TV Dinner. We are smarter than that. Remember, all fats are not created equally. By choosing to include more essential fatty acids in our diet, we are choosing for a healthier lifestyle.

Special Points of Interest:

- Coconut oil has been used traditionally to treat heart disease throughout Asia
- Lauric Acid, found in coconut oil has anti-microbial and bacterial properties
- Lignan, also found in Flaxseed is a type of phytoestrogen. Phytoestrogens are known to help in all kinds of hormonal imbalances such as hot flashes.
- Essential Fatty Acid Supplementation is now being considered as necessary for Fetal Development as

Folic Acid.

- Essential Fatty Acids contribute to health skin, hair and nails.....not big thighs, butts or stomach fat.
- Essential Fatty Acids cannot be produced by the body therefore they must be consumed in the diet.

Omega – 3 Rich Chocolate Pudding Recipe:

Ingredients:

20 oz. (600 grams) Soft Tofu
 1/3-1/2 cup (80-120ml) Real Maple Syrup (or Brown Rice Syrup)
 3 Tbspn. (45ml) Flaxseed oil
 1 Tbspn.(15ml) Vanilla
 1/2 cup (120ml) Cocoa powder
 1 Banana
 1 organic lemon, juiced

Blend tofu, syrup, oil, vanilla and cocoa powder in blender or food processor until smooth. Pour into custard cups and chill for 1 hour (or pour into freezie containers and serve as ice cream bars). Garnish with banana's and sprinkle with lemon juice to prevent discolouration.

Yields 8 kid size portions.

About the Author:



Rupri Mitha N.D., Owner and Naturopathic Doctor of the Brampton Naturopathic Clinic, offers residents of Brampton the choice of reliable, educated holistic health care.

Having completed her education at The Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine (the only accredited Naturopathic Institution in Canada) and subsequently receiving her license, she offers her patients a variety of healing modalities. Methods of treatment include Nutrition, Diet and Lifestyle Counselling, Herbal Medicine, Homeopathy, Acupuncture and Hydrotherapy.

Naturopathic Medicine is covered by most extended health benefit programs.

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