

Americans Eat Too Few Omega-3 Fats by the American Institute for Cancer Research

Although many Americans have cut back on fat, two kinds of fat remain out of balance in the typical diet. There is too much of omega-6 fats and too little of omega-3 fats. The American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) has linked this imbalance to an increased risk of cancer.

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Omega-6 fats are found in vegetable oils such as corn, safflower, sunflower, and soybean oil. They are often used in processed snacks, baked products and commercial salad dressings.

Omega-3 fats are found mostly in fatty fish like salmon, sardines, trout and herring. Smaller amounts are found in canola oil, flaxseed, green leafy vegetables and walnuts. Omega-3 fats have displayed a range of anti-cancer activities in the laboratory and have been repeatedly associated with lower cancer risk in population studies.

How to Improve Your Ratio

The ratio of omega-6 fats in the typical American diet ranges from 10:1 to 15:1. Besides cancer, such a ratio, heavily weighted with omega-6 fats, is also linked to heart disease and inflammatory conditions like arthritis. In healthy populations that consume traditional plant-based diets, the ratio ranges from 2:1 to 4:1.

Scientists are still uncertain exactly how much omega-3 fat you should eat to reduce your cancer risk. But AICR recommends eating a three-ounce serving of different types of fatty fish twice a week.

Although fish oil supplements can provide a hefty dose of omega-3 fats, they raise serious concerns for some people, including diabetics. Individuals who have bleeding disorders or are taking blood-thinning medications daily should discuss the use of fish oil supplements with their physician. If you decide to take fish oil supplements, you should limit your daily dose to 1,000 mg to avoid potential health problems.

This tasty salad is one easy way to up your healthy fat intake.

Omega-3 Salad

2 Tbsp. walnut or canola oil
2 Tbsp. white wine vinegar
2 small cloves garlic, minced
¼ tsp. salt, or to taste
Freshly ground black pepper to taste
½ cup finely chopped celery
1 can (15 oz.) pink or red Alaskan (wild) salmon, backbone and skin removed
¼ cup light canola mayonnaise or other lowfat mayonnaise
1 Tbsp. fresh squeezed lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste
4 cups baby spinach leaves
8 cherry tomatoes cut in half
¼ cup finely chopped walnuts

In small bowl, whisk together first five ingredients for dressing and set aside. Mix celery with salmon and toss with mayonnaise and lemon juice. Season to taste with salt and pepper. In large bowl, toss spinach with dressing. Top with salmon mixture. Place cherry tomato halves around platter. Sprinkle with walnuts.

Per serving: 212 calories, 14g. total fat (2g. saturated fat), 3g. carbohydrates, 18g. protein, 1g. dietary fiber, 594mg. sodium.

To help you put more healthy fats in your diet, AICR offers a free brochure, *The Facts about Fats*. Call 1-800-843-8114, ext. 110, to request a copy.