



K-State Extension Connection

For Immediate Release:

The mission of K-State Research and Extension Family and Consumer Sciences is to link education with life experiences to help people improve their lives, their families and their communities. Family and Consumer Sciences professionals support essential life skills including Community Development, Healthy Lifestyle Choices, Leadership & Volunteer Development, Relationship Development and Resource Management.

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Omega-3 in fish: How eating fish helps your heart



Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men and women in the United States. Every year, 1 in 4 deaths are caused by heart disease. February is American Heart Month, so I

would encourage you to try eating some delicious some heart healthy salmon!

The good news? Heart disease can often be prevented when people make healthy choices and manage their health conditions. If you're worried about heart disease, eating one to two servings of fish a week could reduce your risk of dying of a heart attack.

For many years, the American Heart Association has recommended that people eat fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids at least twice a week. Doctors have long believed that the unsaturated fats in fish, called omega-3 fatty acids, are the nutrients that reduce the risk of dying of heart disease. However, more-recent research suggests that other nutrients in fish or a combination of omega-3 fatty acids and other nutrients in fish may actually be responsible for the health benefits from fish.

What are omega-3 fatty acids, and why are they good for your heart?

Fish contain unsaturated fatty acids, which, when substituted for saturated fatty acids such as those in meat, may lower your cholesterol. But the main beneficial nutrient appears to be omega-3 fatty acids in fatty fish.

Omega-3 fatty acids are a type of unsaturated fatty acid that may reduce inflammation throughout the body. Inflammation in the body can damage your blood vessels and lead to heart disease and strokes.

Omega-3 fatty acids may decrease triglycerides, lower blood pressure slightly, reduce blood clotting, decrease stroke and heart failure risk and reduce irregular heartbeats. Eating at least one to two servings a week of fish, particularly fish that's rich in omega-3 fatty acids such as salmon, appears to reduce the risk of heart disease, particularly sudden cardiac death.

Are there any kinds of fish you should avoid?

Some fish, such as tilapia and catfish, don't appear to be as heart healthy because they contain higher levels of unhealthy fatty acids. Keep in mind that any fish can be unhealthy depending on how it's prepared. For example, broiling or baking fish is a healthier option than is deep-frying.

Some researchers are also concerned about eating fish produced on farms as opposed to wild-caught fish. Researchers think antibiotics, pesticides and other chemicals used in raising farmed fish may cause harmful effects to people who eat the fish. However, some farmed fish — salmon, sea bass and trout — have higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids than their wild counterparts.

How much fish should you eat?

For adults, at least two servings of omega-3-rich fish a week are recommended. A serving size is 3.5 ounces (99 grams), or about the size of a deck of cards. Women who are pregnant or plan to become pregnant and young children should limit the amount of fish they eat because they're most susceptible to the potential effects of toxins in fish

For additional information, contact the Wildcat Extension District, Crawford County, 620-724-8233, Labette County, 620-784-5337, Montgomery County, 620-331-2690, Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930. Our website is <http://www.wildcatdistrict.k-state.edu/> or follow us on Facebook: Wildcat Extension District.

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