



Pearl City Medical Associates, Inc.

# OMEGA 3 FATTY ACIDS

## DOCOSAHEXAENOIC ACID (DHA)

Information provided by: *Natural Medicines Consumer Information and Education*

### What is Docosahexaenoic Acid?

Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) is a fatty acid that is found in the meat of cold-water fish, including mackerel, herring, tuna, halibut, salmon, cod liver, whale blubber, and seal blubber. It can also be made by algae. It is not to be confused with eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA). They are both in fish oil, but are not the same.

### How Does It Work?

DHA plays a key role in the development of eye and nerve tissues. DHA may also reduce the risk of heart and circulatory disease by decreasing the thickness of the blood, reducing inflammation, and lowering blood levels of triglycerides.

### Any interactions?

#### • Drugs

Diabetes and blood pressure medications, NSAIDs, and blood thinners.

#### • Herbs and supplements

Angelica, clove, danshen, garlic, ginger, ginko, red clover, turmeric, andrographis, casein peptides, cat's claw, coenzyme Q10, fish oil, L-arginine, lycium, stinging nettle, theanine.

#### • Foods

No known interactions.

### IS IT EFFECTIVE?

According to *Natural Medicines*, DHA is **POSSIBLY EFFECTIVE** for the following:

#### • Clogged arteries (coronary artery disease)

Increased consumption of DHA in the diet might lower risk of death in people with coronary artery disease.

#### • High cholesterol

Research suggests that taking 1.25 to 4 grams of DHA daily can lower triglyceride levels in people with high cholesterol or high triglyceride levels.

According to *Natural Medicines*, DHA is **POSSIBLY INEFFECTIVE** for the following:

#### • Age-related mental decline

Most research shows that taking DHA alone or with other ingredients does not improve memory, forgetfulness, or learning ability.

According to *Natural Medicines*, there is **INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE** to rate the effectiveness of DHA for:

#### • Age-related macular degeneration (AMD)

#### • Alzheimer's disease

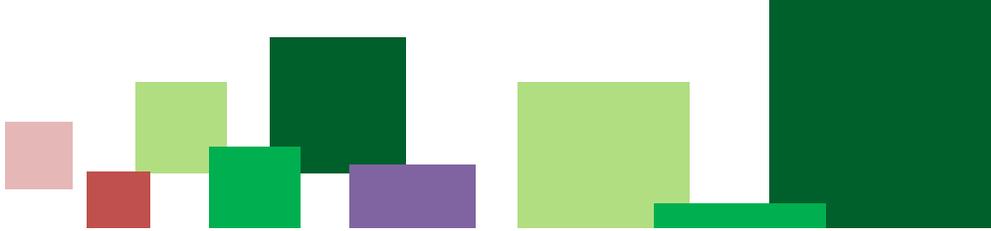
#### • Atopic dermatitis (eczema)

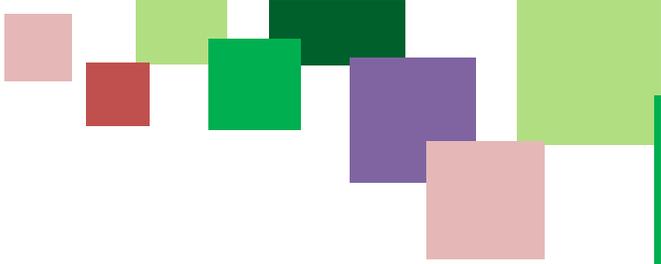
#### • Hypersensitivity

#### • Abnormal heart rhythm

#### • Autism

#### • Breast cancer



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- Crohn's disease
  - Cystic fibrosis
  - Dementia
  - Diarrhea
  - Dyslexia
  - Movement and coordination disorder (dyspraxia)
  - Hypertension
  - Improving infant development
  - Liver disease (nonalcoholic fatty liver disease)
  - Obesity
  - Ear infection
  - Respiratory tract infections
  - Prostate Cancer
  - Inherited condition that causes vision loss (retinitis pigmentosa)
  - Schizophrenia
  - Stroke

### What Dose Is Used?

DHA is taken by mouth in combination with EPA for a variety of conditions.

- **By mouth for adults (general)**

Typical dose is 5 grams of fish oil containing 169-563mg of EPA and 72-312mg of DHA. Experts also recommend increasing your daily dietary intake of cold-water fish, including mackerel, herring, tuna, halibut, and salmon.

- **By mouth for adults with high cholesterol**

DHA 1.25 to 4 grams daily.

### Any Safety concerns?

DHA is **LIKELY SAFE** for most adults and children when taken by mouth. It has been used safely in studies for up to 4 years.

DHA is **POSSIBLY UNSAFE** when used in large amounts greater than 3 grams per day. DHA-containing oils can thin the blood and increase the risk for bleeding. In women, this effect might occur at a lower dose of 1 gram per day.

### Special Precautions & Warnings:

- **Pregnancy and breastfeeding**

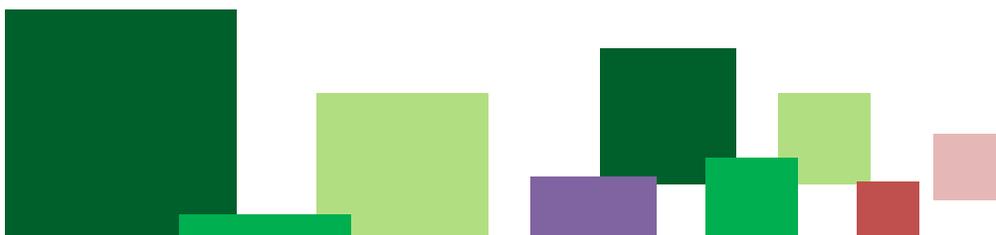
DHA is **LIKELY SAFE** when used appropriately during pregnancy and breastfeeding. DHA is commonly used during pregnancy and is an ingredient in some prenatal vitamins. DHA is a normal component of breast milk and is added as a supplement to some infant formulas. If it is taken by the mother during lactation, DHA levels increase in the breast milk.

- **Aspirin sensitivity**

DHA might affect your breathing if you are sensitive to aspirin.

- **Bleeding conditions**

DHA alone does not seem to affect blood clotting. However, when taken with EPA as in fish oil, doses over 3 grams daily might increase the risk of bleeding.





### Special Precautions & Warnings (continued):

- **Diabetes**

DHA seems to increase blood sugar in people with type 2 diabetes.

- **Low blood pressure**

DHA can lower blood pressure. This might increase the risk of blood pressure becoming too low in people who already have low blood pressure.

### Any Side Effects?

Side effects of DHA include:

- **Loose stools**
- **Nosebleeds**
- **Nausea**
- **Belching**
- **“Fishy” taste**

*See additional brochures for information about the other two omega 3 fatty acids:*

- ***Alpha-linolenic Acid***
  - ***Eicosapentaenoic Acid (EPA)***
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