

OMEGA 3 INDEX (red cell)

Omega-3 fatty acids are essential to the human body and have benefits for our heart, brain, eyes and joints. By reducing inflammation, blood clots and improving membrane function, omega-3 fats are associated with a lower risk of heart complications – including heart disease, plaque build-up and heart attacks – both in persons with a history of heart disease and in healthy individuals. Omega-3 fats are important for optimal brain development in babies and mental function, particularly later in life.

We've become conditioned to think of fat as 'bad'. Omega-3 fats (technically fatty acids), however, are essential to the human body, and have benefits for our heart, brain, eyes, and joints. By reducing inflammation, blood clots, and improving membrane function, omega-3 fats are associated with a lower risk of heart complications – including heart disease, plaque build-up, and heart attacks – both in persons with a history of heart disease and in healthy individuals.

Omega-3 fats also seem to be important for optimal brain development in babies, and mental function, particularly later in life. For pregnant women, an intake of omega-3 fats supports normal visual development in the foetus. In short, the addition of omega-3 fats to the diet is important to maintaining both our physical and mental health.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH LOW ESSENTIAL FATTY ACIDS

Dry flaky skin	Cracking/peeling skin
Excessive ear wax	Excessive thirst
Menstrual cramps	Premenstrual breast pain
Vaginal dryness	Dry mouth/throat
Dry, lacklustre, brittle hair	Dry eyes
Small bumps on back of upper arms	Brittle fingernails
Mixed oily and dry skin	Dandruff or cradle cap

There are potential benefits of omega-3 oils in a wide range of medical conditions. While optimal levels have not yet been defined for EPA and DHA in all circumstances, the Omega-3 Index may be used to document improved omega-3 levels in people who want to reduce risk for several maladies.

This test includes: Total saturated fats, Total monosaturated fats, Total omega 3, 6 & 9, EPA and DHA. The most important and actionable component is the Omega-3 Index.

Specific targets are recommended for the Omega-3 Index because the research supporting a target index of 8% is strong, and we know that you can specifically raise the Index by consuming more omega-3.

We don't, however, know exactly how much EPA and DHA any particular person should be told to take to achieve the 8% target. People differ, and so each person's response to supplemental omega-3s will vary. Just like one cannot predict how much serum cholesterol will go down when a patient is placed on statins, we cannot accurately predict how the Omega-3 Index will respond to an increased intake; it must be individually tested.

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- ❖ EPA, DHA, Total Omega 3 fatty acids, Omega 3 Index, Total Omega 6 fatty acids, Total monosaturated fats, Total Omega 9 fatty acids, Total saturated fats

Other fatty acid tests available

- **AA:EPA Ratio (blood spot) [5001]:** AA (arachidonic acid), EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid)
- **AA:EPA Ratio (red cell) [5002]:** AA (arachidonic acid), EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid)
- **Essential Fatty Acid (red cell) [5011]:** Saturated Fats, Total Saturated, Monounsaturated Fats, Total Monounsaturated; Omega 3 Index, Omega 3 (ALA, DHA, DPA, EPA), Total Omega 3; Omega 6 (AA, EDA, ETA, GLA, LA), Total Omega 6, Omega 3:Omega 6 ratio; Trans Fats

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