

# wellness matters



Choices for healthy living • nutrition • fitness • well-being • health



## RIDING THE **HEAT WAVE**

**T**he Government of Canada estimates that the number of extremely hot days is expected to more than double in some parts of the country over the next 30 years; and while that may be great news for sun lovers, it could pose problems for the young and the elderly.

Children absorb a lot of heat but aren't very good at losing it by sweating, leaving them vulnerable to heat stroke. As for the elderly, underlying health issues (breathing, heart, or kidney problems) may be exacerbated by hot weather.

**There are two things that are essential to consider:** trying to prevent the onset of illness by protecting loved ones from extreme heat and watching for symptoms of heat illness.

London, Ontario-based pediatrician Dr. Michelle Ponti says the challenge facing parents is "that kids don't recognize symptoms such as thirst or being too

hot, because they tend to push through all that while having fun.

"But preventing heat illness is relatively simple if you set time limits on them playing outside, and ensure they avoid the peak heat hours."

If being outside during peak hours is unavoidable – such as during a family picnic – then Ponti suggests "finding shade and bringing along sun hats, sunscreen, and plenty of liquids."

Ponti adds that these general guidelines are suitable for the elderly as well. "Again, the key is to prevent heat illness symptoms, which include dizziness, rapid heartbeat and nausea," she says. "If these symptoms occur, you should immediately move the sufferer to a cool place and provide plenty of liquids to drink, preferably water."

- 3 Ideas for you to host a theme-food fun night**
- 5 HIIT it hard with high-intensity interval training**
- 7 Reap the rewards of feelings of gratitude**

## 10 FAST FACTS

**1 A one-hour workout** is four per cent of your day.

**2 Walking at a brisk pace** can burn almost as many calories as jogging the same distance.

**3 Regular weight training** increases the number of calories burned during normal activities.

**4 It takes 12 weeks** of an exercise routine before you start to see measurable changes.

**5 An estimated 60** per cent of gym memberships go unused.

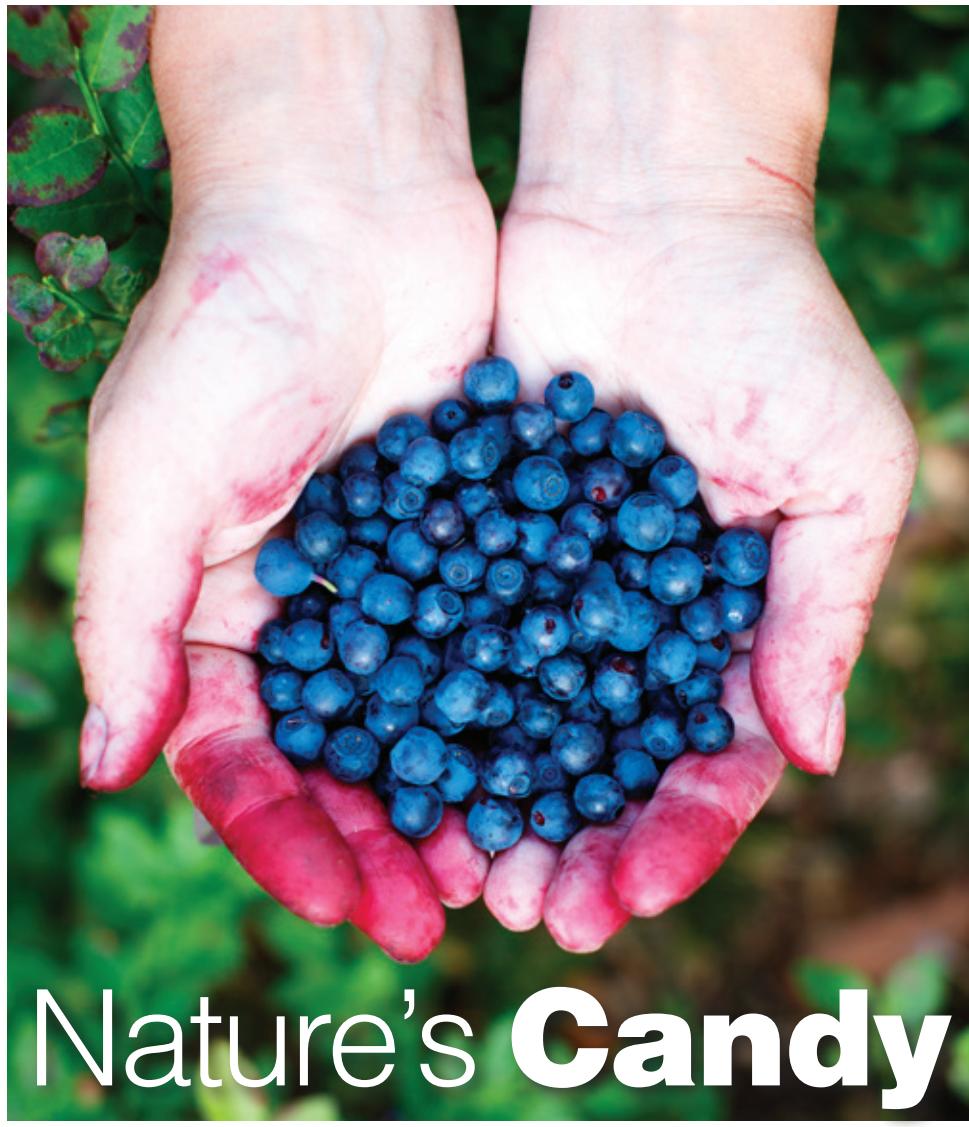
**6 Rinsing strawberries** spoils them quicker. So wash before you eat.

**7 For your daily protein** it is recommended men eat two palm-sized portions while women eat one palm-sized portion with each meal.

**8 For eye health**, look away from your computer screen every 20 minutes for about a minute.

**9 When purchasing sunglasses**, look for ones that block out 99 to 100 percent of both UVA and UVB radiation.

**10 Walking barefoot** in the grass can help decrease anxiety and depression, and increases the levels of those feel-good endorphins.



# Nature's Candy

In the summertime, particularly late July through August, one of Mother Nature's best treats is at its prime: fresh blueberries. When super nutritious foods are being considered, blueberries always make the list.

A day spent picking blueberries or sourcing them from a local farmer's market is well worth it. In scientific testing of over 100 foods, blueberries consistently rank highly for their antioxidant benefits. These health-promoting properties have been shown to play a role in better blood-pressure maintenance, protecting cardiac muscle, improving insulin response, reducing memory loss, and reduced growth of cancer cells in breast and colon cancer studies.

One cup of blueberries provides four

grams of fibre, 11 grams of carbohydrate and about 85 calories. Blueberries are also hydrating with a water content of 85 percent. Given their superfood status, there is unfortunately an abundance of misinformation online that exaggerates these claims.

What is true is that blueberries are worth including in your meals and snacks regularly. Enjoy them fresh in the summer months and then keep a supply in the freezer for topping oatmeal or throwing into smoothies in the fall and winter. They're a perfect natural way to satisfy a sweet craving. For a well-balanced, plant-based meal idea that also makes great leftovers to pack for a workday lunch, try the salad recipe here courtesy of BC Blueberries.



## summer recipe

### Blueberry Superfoods Salad

Serves: 4

#### Ingredients

- 2 cups (200 g) raw kale, stem removed and chopped
  - 1½ cups (225 g) B.C. blueberries, fresh or frozen
  - 1½ cups (225 g) cooked quinoa, cooled (2/3 cup uncooked quinoa)
  - 1 cup (150 g) raw beet, peeled and grated
  - 3 tbsp (30 g) hemp hearts
  - ½ cup (80 ml) Flax Lemon Vinaigrette (see recipe below)
  - ¼ cup (35 g) sunflower seeds
- Flax Lemon Vinaigrette:
- 3 tbsp (45 ml) flax seed oil
  - 2 tbsp (30 ml) lemon juice
  - 1 tbsp (15 ml) fresh parsley, finely chopped
  - 1 tsp (5 ml) honey
  - 1 tsp (5 ml) lemon zest, finely grated
  - 1 tsp (5 ml) pepper
  - ½ tsp (2.5 ml) salt
  - ¼ tsp (1.5 ml) turmeric powder (optional)

#### Instructions

##### Vinaigrette

- In a bowl, whisk together, lemon juice, parsley, honey, lemon zest, pepper, salt and turmeric.
- Slowly drizzle in the flax seed oil until emulsified.

##### Salad

- In a bowl combine kale, blueberries, cooled quinoa, grated beet, hemp hearts and flax lemon vinaigrette.
- Top with sunflower seeds.

Find many more beautiful blueberry recipes at [bcblueberry.com](http://bcblueberry.com)

**"Motivation is what gets you started. Habit is what keeps you going."**

— Jim Rohn, author

# Theme Food Fun

**H**osting an outdoor gathering on a beautiful evening is a perfect way to celebrate all that makes summer so awesome. Great food and activities shared with friends in the fresh air! To prevent excessive intake of sweets, rich food or alcohol that can turn the light and healthy feeling of summer into a heavy, overdone mode, choose a theme and make plans from there. Consider these five fun ideas:

**Tropical Night** – Make pineapple the star in an all-natural fruit punch made fizzy with sugar-free soda water. Pair pineapple, grapes and cheese on a platter. Use pineapple in main dishes like sweet and sour chicken, grilled pineapple tofu kebabs or homemade Hawaiian pizzas. Finish with a dessert platter featuring a variety of bright and colourful tropical fruit.

**Mediterranean Night** – Take inspiration from the beautiful cuisine of Greece and Italy. Summer-ripe tomatoes, basil and healthy olive oil can be featured in appetizers like bruschetta, grilled vegetable skewers and even soup served in individual mini portions. Offer a variety of red, yellow and heirloom tomatoes as garnishes for homemade burgers.



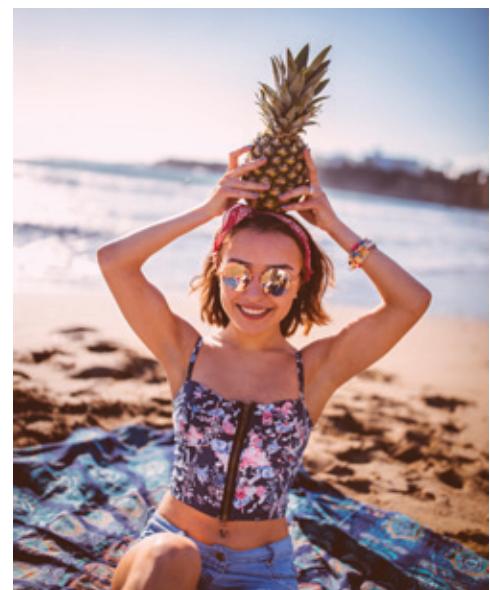
**"Food is not just eating energy. It's an experience."**  
– Guy Fieri, restaurateur



**All-Canadian Night** – With red and white as the theme, make a vegetable platter using veggies like cherry tomatoes, red bell pepper strips and radishes interspersed with white cauliflower and jicama slices. Feature

summer-ripe red fruit like cherries, watermelon, peaches and raspberries.

Offer burger toppings showcasing different regions of Canada. For example, grainy mustard and whole wheat buns from Prairie-grown crops, smoked salmon and blueberry chutney from the West Coast and more from the different areas of the country.



**Sports Night** – Theme the food around an active, healthy life. Offer a summer-ripe fruit smoothie bar and dishes that feature plant-based goodness like hummus, energy ball-style cookies, grilled chicken, salmon, fresh seafood or tofu and, of course, an abundance of vegetables.

**Mexican Night** – You can never go wrong with a taco bar heaped with homemade fresh salsa and guacamole. A virgin lime and strawberry margarita bar is a delicious, refreshing touch, too.

Along with the theme, consider putting some emphasis on the party other than making it entirely about the food. Guests could come in related attire or full costumes. Games and activities can be added that match the theme.

# Group Fitness

**I**ncreasingly, the focus of exercise is on home-based routines, the obvious advantages being you can work out whenever you have spare time, and in private.

But Sandy Reimer, director of health and fitness for the YWCA of Vancouver, urges fitness buffs to consider the advantages of group fitness. "First, a good group fitness studio will offer so many routines you'll never get bored," she says. "Our Vancouver YWCA, for example, conducts 65 different group classes weekly."

Group fitness also provides the crucial motivation often lacking at home: studies have found that group exercises challenge you to work out beyond your perceived limitation — and a good instructor can detect signs of fatigue and push you to your limit, as well as ensure your proper form, which may decrease your risk of injury.

And considering everyone in a group is working toward the same goal, chances are you'll have more fun and make friends.



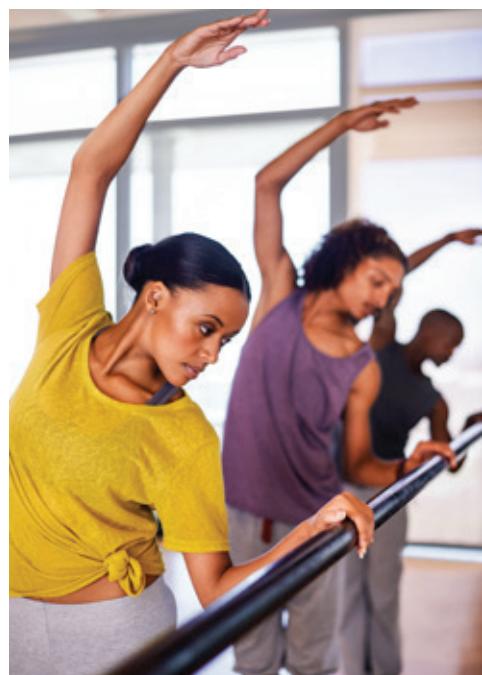
Reimer, who has taught group classes for more than 30 years, notes: "Contrary to what many people might think, you're not on display in a group dynamic — it's a very safe environment, whether the class is dance, yoga, or Barre."

As far as determining if a class is for you, Reimer says, "first, ensure the instructor is

certified; after that, drop in when the class is in session, to see if the vibe is for you."

Once a class is chosen and the first session begins, Reimer advises that participants let go and enjoy the music.

"After just a few weeks you'll start seeing results, not just in your body, but in an improved mood — I promise you!"



## Raising The Barre

**E**verything from Pilates to sandbag workouts have been touted as the ideal exercise for office-bound people, due to their focus on postural strength. But ballet Barre is one of the best ways to enhance flexibility and improve balance.

Barre was developed in the 1950s by German dancer Lotte Berk, who, after injuring her back, came up with the idea to combine her dance conditioning with rehabilitative therapy.

The difference between Barre and a typical strength training class is that practitioners perform one-inch isometric contractions — with these tiny increments powerful enough to fire up the muscle and make it more elastic, but not too big to tear it.

Ella Jotie, co-founder, Barre Fitness, says Barre's benefit for office workers who spend all their time hunched over a desk is that it develops a strong neutral spine and teaches them to move instinctively from their core. "Plus, it's a completely different exercise experience from what you find in big-box gyms and boutique fitness clubs."

Jotie, whose Vancouver-based business was the first of its kind in Canada when it was launched in 2010 and will soon expand beyond its current five locations throughout Metro Vancouver, explains: "In Barre, you focus on exhausting the auxiliary muscles that support your core, and this low-impact routine literally causes you to feel them burning and shaking."

Jotie encourages those who are skeptical about the efficacy of Barre to visit her website. "It contains a video workout library so you can try a few exercises at home," she says. "If you do the movements properly, I guarantee the resulting effects will make you a Barre enthusiast."

**"If you get tired learn to rest, not to quit."**  
— Banksy, artist

# Can Glaucoma Be Prevented?

**Glaucoma is the leading cause of irreversible blindness** and affects more than 250,000 Canadians, according to Health Canada. Treatment can slow its progression; but can it be prevented?

A team from the University of California suggests that glaucoma can be prevented and recently released a report showing that moderate to vigorous-intensity exercise may be the key.

Using data collected in the U.S., the team found that the most physically active people had a 73 percent lower risk of developing glaucoma than the least active.

The data had been collected since 2003 from wearable ActiGraph devices, and this enabled the team to discover a six percent reduction in the risk of developing glaucoma from every 10-unit increase in walking speed and steps



per minute. They also found a 25 percent reduction in the risk of glaucoma for every 10-minute increase in the weekly amount of moderate to vigorous activity.

Team member Dr. Victoria Tseng said: "People who exercise with higher speed and more steps of walking or running may even further decrease their glaucoma risk compared to people who exercise at lower speeds with less steps."

Maple Ridge, B.C.-based optometrist Murray Hurlbert says the study "makes sense, as more blood flows through the retina — which the optic nerve is part — than any other part of the body," and loss of tissue that leads to glaucoma is "accelerated by poor circulation."

Hurlbert concludes: "If one is able to improve blood flow to the optic nerve head, it makes sense that this would help to nourish the tissue and maintain its health as well."



## HIIT It Hard

**P**erformed properly, high intensity interval training (HIIT) — in which more repetitions of an exercise are done in less time, combined with rest periods — can result in improved heart function, substantial fat loss and improved blood glucose levels.

But is it for everyone? The answer is yes, but only to a degree.

The International Sports Sciences Association (ISSA) says the gains from HIIT will be more evident among untrained individuals than athletes; however, untrained individuals are more likely to suffer muscle strain from working out at a higher intensity.

Additionally, HIIT will not improve the ability of practitioners in long distance or duration endurance events.

Most experts suggest that more than two sessions per week are necessary for improving performance without causing excessive stress, and Stephen Seiler, considered to be one of the world's foremost experts in the practical use of HIIT, says more than two sessions per week have no added benefit and amplify the likelihood of injury due to muscle strain.

ISSA also suggests that for conditioning and fat loss, you should

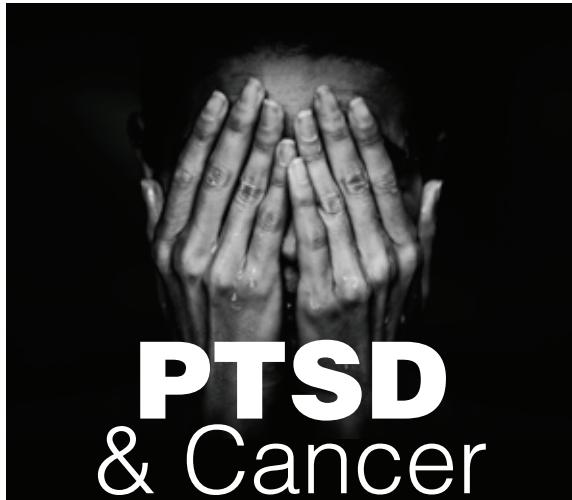
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pick an endurance exercise; establish a baseline that can be sustained for 30 to 60 minutes and start with a work-to-rest ratio of one-to-one minutes, eventually building to three or four minutes with one minute of rest.

For resistance circuit training intervals for strength endurance and fat loss, ISSA suggests picking three to five full-body exercises that can be executed with good form; keep the total reps of each exercise under 75; and rest 30 to 60 seconds after every one-two minute set.

**"Fitness is like a marriage: you can't cheat and expect it to work."**

Anonymous



## PTSD & Cancer

Cancer survivors developing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was deemed rare by bodies such as the Canadian Cancer Society; but researchers from the National University of Malaysia recently found that six months after patients received a cancer diagnosis, 21 percent had developed PTSD.

The study initially examined 469 patients one month after their diagnosis, then at six months, and finally after four years. Although researchers eventually focused on 245 people after patients either dropped out of the study or died, over one third initially diagnosed with PTSD still experienced symptoms four years later.

The biggest problem for patients aside from suffering the symptoms of PTSD (anxiety, poor sleep or even flashbacks) is that it can actually impact cancer treatment.

Even though many professional bodies downplay the prevalence of PTSD in those who have not served in the military, Ontario magazine publisher Ute Lawrence knows otherwise: following a horrific automobile accident in 1999, she developed the disorder, was successfully treated, and in 2006 founded the PTSD Association of Canada, the first association of its kind in North America.

The Association's website ([ptsdassociation.com](http://ptsdassociation.com)) has a variety of tools designed to help those with PTSD, including self-assessment questionnaires developed by health experts to determine whether you might have the disorder. The website is also an excellent referral resource for those seeking treatment.

Another source of help in Canada is Wellspring ([wellspring.ca](http://wellspring.ca)), a network of community-based support centres offering restorative programs to both those who are living with cancer and those who care for them. This charitable organization offers stress management and coping techniques to cancer patients in Alberta and Southern Ontario.

# Train The Brain To Prevent Dementia

**It has long been recognized that the brain is like the heart** in that it requires regular workouts to stay nimble – and now a new study led by the Indiana University School of Medicine is being credited for providing the first scientific evidence that brain training can help ward off dementia.

The study, released last November, collected data from a project that monitored 2,802 healthy older adults over a 10-year period, as they aged from 74 to 84 on average. The participants were assigned to groups performing one of three different kinds of cognitive training: memory training, reasoning training or speed of processing training. The speed of processing training was done by asking the participants to identify an object in the centre and at the periphery of a screen.

Of the 1,220 participants who completed the project, 260 developed dementia – but researchers say the risk of developing the disease was 29 percent lower for those who had done speed of processing training.



Nalini Sen, director, research program at the Alzheimer Society of Canada, says the findings "are consistent with our message that actively exercising the brain, along with physical exercise, may reduce the onset of dementia."

While the University of Indiana study's brain twisters may seem overly complex to undertake regularly, Sen notes that "effective brain exercise is very simple and includes things like taking up a new hobby or even switching around one's daily routine."

Sen stresses that although exercising the brain can be done while on the Internet, "being socially active is something we strongly advocate because it rejuvenates the brain and also wards off depression, which is said to be a contributing factor to dementia."

**"We can never obtain peace in the outer world until we make peace with ourselves."**

– Dalai Lama, spiritual leader

# Kiddie Health

**L**et's face it: summer may be a great break for the kids, but it also exposes them to what child educators refer to as "the summer slide," whereby the holidays represent nothing less than a break in learning and a loss of reading and other skills.

How severe is the problem? Oxford Learning estimates that over the summer, two months of reading skills are lost, as are 2.6 months of math skills, with the losses being recognized as early as Grade 1.

Oxford also estimates that by the end of Grade Six, students who have suffered summer learning loss are an average of two years behind their peers, and that it can take six weeks in the fall for kids to re-learn old material.

Fortunately, keeping kids' minds as well as their bodies stimulated over the holidays is relatively simple, and experts agree that the first step is for parents to set a reading



schedule — whether it is daily for 10 to 30 minutes, or just several times a week. Otherwise, they say, it will be difficult to achieve the momentum necessary for young brains to absorb information.

The Canadian Paediatric Society strongly believes mental and physical exercise is a must during summer, and it encourages children to read and parents to organize

outings to libraries, museums and other venues. Oxford suggests teaching kids through your own tasks, such as baking a cake or fixing a bicycle.

To further promote proper cognitive development, the society advises parents to minimize and manage their kids' Internet screen time, prioritizing educational, age-appropriate and interactive programming.

# The Benefits Of Gratitude

**Counting one's blessings is as old as civilization**, but leave it to researchers to put a 21st-century spin on why the practice is so important for us. Gratitude can not only decrease stress, it can actually make you happy.

Neuroscience researcher Alex Korb has demonstrated that feelings of gratitude activate the regions in the brain associated with the release of the feel-good hormones serotonin and dopamine. Korb also says when these hormones are produced, the brain looks for more things to be grateful for.

If this sounds like wishful thinking, Marianne Gareau, a Vancouver-based registered psychologist, insists she has seen the positive benefits of being thankful first hand.



"Persuading clients to focus on what is good in their lives rather than the bad is a major part of my practice," she says.

"After a while it can become a habit, and from there it's a case of the old truism, 'where attention goes, energy flows,' meaning, thinking about good things and being grateful actually alters your mood for the better."

Gareau acknowledges that adopting this mindset can be challenging, given the relentless media bombardment of negative sentiment and messages. "And anthropologically speaking, the human brain is inclined toward negative thought because it's part of our survival mechanism," she says.

It takes some effort to adopt a different outlook. "It's not a matter of blocking negative thoughts but identifying what is going right in your life," says Gareau. "Try devoting several minutes per day reviewing the things you should be grateful for: before long, the good thoughts will outweigh the bad."

**"There is a voice that doesn't use words. Listen."**

— Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi, poet

# The 101 On Omega-3

**O**ur aging population has prompted a flurry of research on ways to slow cognitive decline; and increasingly this research is demonstrating that heart health-friendly omega-3 fatty acids are crucial to brain health.

The latest study to tout the brain benefits of omega-3 EPA and DHA acids, most readily found in fish and fish oil, comes from the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, which last year tested the memories of young adults who took fish oil pills daily for six months. The scientists found that the oil boosted the study subjects' working memory by as much as 23 percent.

Unsurprisingly, some medical experts claim taking EPA and DHA does nothing for the brain. But those researching their efficacy believe the acids are critical for cognitive function, since 60 percent of the fat comprising brain volume is DHA, which preserves cell membrane health and facilitates communication between brain cells.

Lots of quality fish oils are available, but another way to get omega-3s is through flax or even krill oil, which is a lot more resistant to oxidative damage than fish oil.

## The facts

- Omega-3 fats have many functions in our body and are important for good health. There are three kinds of omega-3 fats: ALA (alpha-linolenic acid), DHA (docosahexaenoic acid), and EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid).
- ALA is an essential fat so it must be consumed in the diet. Our bodies can make EPA and DHA from ALA, but this ability is very limited. Dieticians suggest it's important to include foods rich in DHA and EPA in your diet.
- The amount of omega-3 fat you need depends on your age and whether you are male or female.
- Your doctor may recommend more omega-3 fats if you have heart disease or are at risk for heart disease. Talk to your doctor or dietitian for more information.



## How much should you aim for?

For men 19 years of age and older, the recommended intake of ALA is 1.6 grams per day; for women 19 and older 1.1g per day; for pregnant women 19 and over 1.4g per day; breastfeeding women 19 and over 1.3g per day. Dieticians say a healthy diet that aims for at least two servings per week of fish will provide anywhere from 0.3 to 0.45g of EPA and DHA.

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For sales and subscriptions please contact Andrea Burgers at 604.473.0305 or [aburgers@canadawide.com](mailto:aburgers@canadawide.com).

For administration inquiries please contact Tracy McRitchie at 604.473.0388 or [tmcritchie@canadawide.com](mailto:tmcritchie@canadawide.com).

**Editor:** Lynn Mitges

**Art Director:** Bernhard Holzmann

**Publisher:** Brad Liski

**Contributing Writers:** Natalie Bruckner-Menchelli  
Robin Brunet  
Lynn Mitges

**Advisory Board:** Patricia Chuey, R.D.,  
Chris Cunningham, M.D.,  
Lori Yarrow, D.C., P.M.P.

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