

Did you know?..... **RX** Information from Jenny

WHAT I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

Omega-3 fatty acids include EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) (found in fish) and alpha-linolenic acid (found in soy, canola oil, flaxseed, and English walnuts). There is good evidence that omega-3 fatty acids, particularly EPA and DHA, prevent heart disease. In people who already have heart disease, they help prevent death, heart attack and stroke. They also reduce triglycerides. Omega-3 fatty acids might also help rheumatoid arthritis, high blood pressure, depression, bipolar disorder and certain kidney problems.

The best source of omega-3 fatty acids is fatty fish, like salmon. The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends that everyone eat at least two fatty fish meals (baked or broiled) weekly for cardiovascular health. People who have heart disease should try to eat fatty fish daily. Also add foods rich in alpha-linolenic acid (mentioned above) to your diet. But they are not good substitutes for fish because they do not provide enough EPA/DHA. Fish oil capsules are sold over-the-counter or by prescription. Over-the-counter fish oil is considered a supplement, not a drug, so quality and content varies. Choose products with the "USP Verified Mark" on the label. These have been tested, and have acceptable levels of mercury. They are confirmed to contain what the label says they contain.

Fish oil can cause nausea, heartburn or loose stool. It can have a fishy aftertaste. Refrigerating or freezing the capsules might help. Discard capsules with a very strong or spoiled taste. There is a small increased risk of bleeding or bruising when taking fish oil at doses greater than 3 grams daily. High doses of alpha-linolenic acid may increase the risk of prostate cancer, so supplements should be avoided in men with prostate cancer or at risk of prostate cancer. Check with your healthcare provider before taking fish oil capsules if you are allergic to fish or are taking aspirin, warfarin (Coumadin) or clopidogrel (Plavix).