Study: Increased intake of omega-3 fatty acids linked to improved heart health outcomes

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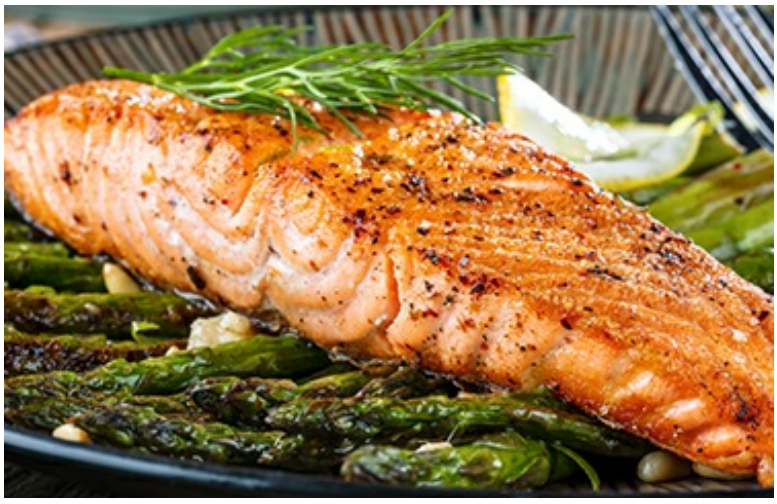

A new study presents “compelling evidence” for consuming more of omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA – nutrients that seafood possesses rich quantities of – for cardiovascular prevention.

The meta-analysis, considered to be the “most comprehensive analysis of the role of omega-3 dosage on cardiovascular prevention to date,” was published in the most recent issue of in Mayo Clinic Proceedings and involves an in-depth review of 40 clinical

trials. It finds that intake of EPA and DHA is correlated with reduced risk of coronary heart disease (CHD) events, which cause 7.4 million deaths globally each year, and reduced risk of myocardial infarction, or heart attacks.

According to the study, EPA and DHA supplementation is associated with a 13 percent reduction in risk for myocardial infarction; 35 percent reduction in risk for fatal myocardial infarction; 10 percent reduction in risk for CHD events; and a 9 percent reduction in risk for CHD mortality.

"The study supports the notion that EPA and DHA intake contributes to cardioprotection, and that whatever you're getting through the diet, you likely need more," Carl Lavie, a cardiologist at Ochsner Health in New Orleans and one of the study's authors, said in a press release.

The benefits that these omega-3 fatty acids pose for cardiovascular health appear to increase with dosage, the researchers noted. Adding an extra 1,000 milligrams of EPA and DHA per day decreased the risk of cardiovascular disease and heart attack even more, they said – the extra dosage saw risk of cardiovascular disease events decrease by 5.8 percent, and risk for heart attack decrease by 9 percent. Researchers considered dosages up to 5,500 milligrams per day.

The report backs the results of Harvard School of Public Health's earlier meta-analysis published in October 2019, which considered EPA and DHA dosage across 13 largest clinical studies.

"When separate analyses arrive at similar results, that's not only validating; it also underscores the science base needed to inform future intake recommendations," Aldo Bernasconi, report co-author and vice president of data science for the Global Organization for EPA and DHA Omega-3s (GOED), said. "Because this paper included more studies and all dosages, the estimates for a dose-response are more precise and the conclusions stronger."

An optimal way of EPA and DHA intake is through eating fish, "particularly fatty fish such as salmon, anchovies, and sardines," GOED said.

"People should consider the benefits of omega-3 supplements, at doses of 1,000 to 2,000 milligrams per day – far higher than what is typical, even among people who regularly eat fish," Lavie said. "Taking omega-3 supplements is a relatively low-cost, high-impact way to improve heart health with few associated risks."

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