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A new diet book says food high in omega-3 gives you more brain power, prevents disease and leads to a longer, happier life

ost your brain power, reduce depression and delay the ageing process. **How?**

Omega-3 works in many different ways. It increases brain power because 60 per cent of the brain is made up of fat, of which a predominant amount is brain omega-3. So the more we eat, the better our brains and nerves work. The risk of heart disease is decreased because omega-3 lowers blood pressure, guards against blood clotting and prevents the chaotic beating of the heart. It makes us happier by suppressing a substance secreted by immune cells that leads to depression.

Does omega-3 actually aid weight loss?

It's not clear at this stage, but new research indicates omega-3 helps with weight loss, especially around the abdominal area. When I have incorporated omega-3 into my program, people lose weight. You can lose weight on most healthy, balanced diets, but you wouldn't get the benefits from omega-3, which are generally life-saving.

Shopping List

- Fresh fish
- Canned fish
- Omega-3 eggs
- Canola oil
- Legumes
- Vegetables and fruit
- Tea
- Low-fat milk
- High-fibre cereal
- Chicken breast
- Flaxseed oil

You devote a chapter to the glycaemic index (GI). How important is this?

The glycaemic index measures the rate at which carbohydrate foods are broken down in our bodies. Those with lower GI give a gradual and sustained blood glucose response. This can make you feel full, thus helping with weight loss and lower insulin response. The quantity of carbohydrate per meal is important. I recommend two to three serves of carb at each meal, one of which should ideally be low GI. A serve is a slice of bread, an apple or a cup of milk. If you're hungry, have something decent like a piece of raisin toast or piece of fruit. Eat foods like strawberries, which are really yummy but don't contain carbohydrate so can be eaten freely.

Eating fish is integral to this eating plan. Is it realistic for someone with a limited budget?

Canned fish is wonderful and cheap. It's also great for busy people as it's so convenient. In Australia, some canned fish is higher in omega-3 than fresh fish. And frozen fish is fine, too, even if it's breaded. In my book, I show readers how to understand the nutritional panel on the packaging.

How much exercise do you recommend?

Walking is very beneficial. People think they have to struggle at the gym, but walking is actually very good—just remember that while you're strolling you should be able to have a conversation but not sing! The longer you exercise the better, but try to aim for 40 to 60 minutes of brisk walking or other exercise six days a week. As well as diet and exercise, being in the right mind-set is also important. Some people can binge eat when they're not even hungry, so being in control is very important. ■

Eight Omega-3 Diet rules

- Have some form of omega-3 every day, whether it be eggs, seafood or flaxseed oil.
- Eat two to three serves of any carbohydrate at each meal, (ie, a sandwich is made up of two slices, or serves, of bread; add an orange to make up three serves).
- Snack on fruit, raisin toast or yoghurt.
- Cut saturated fats (including those found in biscuits) right down, but make sure you eat good fats (ie, fish and nuts).
- Fill up on vegetables.
- Eat little and often to keep your sugar levels up.
- Be positive and visualise how you would like to look.
- A glass of red wine a day for women and two for men is considered safe.

"You'll start to see the health benefits in just three to four days," says Ratnesar.

