



OFF THE SHELF



Author **SHAMALA RATNESAR** believes we can be smarter, lighter and happier by adding Omega 3-rich foods to our diet.

Q. The term “super food” is bandied around a lot. What makes Omega 3 worthy of the tag?

A. It is truly a super food and works in different ways to earn that description. To start with it is a heart food, working to prevent heart attacks. It reduces blood clotting, blood pressure and clogging of the arteries, and if someone does have a heart attack it prevents chaotic beating of the heart, which often kills people. It truly is life-saving. No other nutrient can do these things.

Q. Why has it taken so long to unearth the benefits of Omega 3-rich foods such as seafood and eggs?

A. There have been thousands of studies since the 1970s and information has been locked up in scientific journals and no one had taken the trouble to get it to the public. I've been working on it for 11 years. I guess people

haven't known how to incorporate it into a diet.

Q. What was the most surprising thing you learned from your research?

A. It is the happy food. It can help to prevent and treat depression and keep us happier because our brains are mainly made of fat, and all nerve cells are rich in Omega 3. Another surprising thing is that it may actually help with fat loss.

Q. New diet books are constantly coming on the market. What sets yours apart?

A. It's based on the eating habits of the healthiest people in the world, and I'm referring there to the Japanese and Mediterranean peoples. So it's not what you could call a short-term fad diet. The underlying factor is that both cultures eat lots of fish and other seafood.

Q. What are some simple

changes people can make to their lives to be healthier?

A. Increase Omega 3, eat regularly, and I recommend people have two to three serves of carbohydrates at each meal. That way people are maximising their energy. Also people should enjoy food. It can't be boring. For physical activity I ask people to aim for 30 minutes of some kind of exercise six days a week. And being positive is really important.

Q. What was your path to becoming a dietitian?

A. I've always been interested in healthy food. At school my favourite subject was biology and I loved food, so it was combining the science and the art.

■ **The Omega-3 Diet Revolution** (Macmillan Press, \$33) is out now.

— VANESSA SANTER