

How much omega-3 fatty acid do we need to prevent cardiovascular disease?

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A team of French scientists have found the dose of DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) that is "just right" for preventing cardiovascular disease in healthy men. In a research report appearing in the September 2009 print issue of *The FASEB Journal*, the scientists show that a 200 mg dose of DHA per day is enough to affect biochemical markers that reliably predict cardiovascular problems, such as those related to aging, atherosclerosis, and diabetes. This study is the first to identify how much DHA is necessary to promote optimal heart health.

"This study shows that regularly consuming small amounts of DHA is likely to improve the health status of people, especially in regards to [cardiovascular function](#)," said Michel Lagarde, co-author of the study.

To determine the optimal dose of DHA, Lagarde and colleagues examined the effects of increasing doses of DHA on 12 healthy male volunteers between ages of 53 and 65. These men consumed doses of DHA at 200, 400, 800, and 1600 mg per day for two weeks for each dose amount, with DHA being the only omega-3 fatty acid in their diet. Blood and urine samples were collected before and after each dose and at eight weeks after DHA supplementation stopped. The researchers then examined these samples for biochemical markers indicating the effects of each dose on the volunteers.

"Now that we have a very good idea about how much DHA is just right, the next step is to try it out in an expanded clinical trial that involves many more people," said Gerald Weissmann, M.D., Editor-in-Chief of

The [FASEB Journal](#). "Until then, I'll stick with tasty foods that contain DHA, like fish, rather than getting a quick fatty-acid fix at the local vitamin store."

More information: Nicolas Guillot, Emilie Caillet, Martine Laville, Catherine Calzada, Michel Lagarde, and Evelyne Véricel. Increasing intakes of the long-chain -3 docosahexaenoic acid: effects on platelet functions and redox status in healthy men. *FASEB J.* 2009 23: 2909-2916. www.fasebj.org/cgi/content/abstract/23/9/2909

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