

A recent issue of Mayo Clinic Proceedings summarizes the latest findings on omega-3 fatty acids and cardiovascular health, and advocates supplementation for the groups most likely to benefit.

Review of omega-3 fatty acids and heart disease risk

Large trials of over 32,000 participants using fish oil supplements have shown reductions in cardiovascular events (heart attacks, stroke) of 19% to 45%. Researchers recommend consumption of EPA and DHA at 1 gram/day for those with known coronary artery disease and at least 500 mg/day for those without disease. The recommendation is increased to 3 to 4 grams/day for those with high triglycerides, a dosage shown to lower triglycerides by as much as 20% to 50%. Since 2 meals of oily fish per week generally provide only 400 to 500 mg/day of DHA and EPA, people with high triglycerides and heart disease are strongly encouraged to use fish oil supplements to reach beneficial levels. Researchers also state that the combination of omega-3 supplements and statin drugs provides significantly enhanced benefit over statin use alone in improving blood lipid levels.

Mayo Clin Proc. 2008;83(3):324-332.

This important review can be accessed in its entirety at the following link on the Mayo Clinic Proceedings website:

<http://www.mayoclinicproceedings.com/pdf%2F8303%2F8303r1.pdf>