

Fish: Food for Optimal Health



My mother used to call fish “brain food.” Today we know that this is true. Studies have shown that eating fish provides life-long benefits and is especially important during times of brain development. Since neural stimulation and new pathways in the brain can develop and continue throughout life, it is vital to consume fish and other sources of essential fats including DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) and EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid), part of the Omega-3 fatty acid family. DHA is especially important for the retina and is the predominant fat found in cell membranes of brain gray matter.

Ernst J. Schaefer, MD, an Agricultural Research Service-funded scientist, led a United States Department of Agriculture nutrition research study analyzing the relationship of blood levels of DHA and the risk of dementia in 900 men and women. At the conclusion of the nine-year study, researchers found that those participants with the highest blood levels of DHA, who consumed about three servings of fish a week, or 180 milligrams of DHA per day, had half the risk of developing dementia when compared with those who consume little DHA.

Fish may also be helpful in reducing the risk of kidney cancer, according to a study of 61,000 women in Sweden published in The Journal of the American Medical Association. Women who consumed one or more servings of fatty fish per week over 10 years were 74 percent less likely to develop kidney cancer.

Salmon is an excellent source of DHA and EPA and the fat soluble vitamin D. Salmon is an unusual fish that begins life in fresh water then spends time in salt water before returning to fresh water again. Salmon thrives in very cold regions such as Alaska, Scotland and Norway and is traditionally cured or smoked in these regions. Today, much of the salmon is raised in fish farms which mimic the conditions of the wild; however, the fatty acid content of these fish lacks the valuable DHA and EPA content and is less healthful overall than wild caught salmon. Eating salmon is a delicious and healthful way to enhance brain and nervous system health—enjoy!

SALMON NUTRITIONAL OVERVIEW

Based on a 3.5 ounce serving Wild Salmon Farm-raised Salmon Calories 233 Protein 25.6 gm Total Fat 13.4 gm Cholesterol 49 mg

GINGER-SESAME SALMON

1 cup water 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice 4 salmon steaks 2 teaspoons soy sauce 2 teaspoons rice vinegar 1 tablespoon fresh ginger root, finely grated 1 green onion, cut in strips 1 clove garlic, crushed 1 Tablespoon sesame oil Bring water and fresh lemon juice to a boil in a deep non-stick sauté pan or skillet. Gently place salmon steaks in water. Cover, reduce heat and simmer very gently for 6 to 8 minutes until the fish is opaque in color. Arrange salmon on a warm serving dish. Mix soy sauce, rice vinegar and ginger together and spoon over salmon. Scatter green onions over fish. In a small pan, combine garlic and sesame oil. Sauté lightly and drizzle on fish. Makes 4 servings. NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION Calories per serving: 254 Calories from fat: 33% Protein: 36 gm Carbohydrate: 6 gm Fat: 9 gm Cholesterol: 88 mg Fiber: 2 gm

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