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## Omega 3 and Prostate Cancer

### Omega 3 and Prostate Cancer



Omega 3 and prostate cancer are making the news again. Omega 3 is considered an essential fatty acid for a number of reasons, not the least of which may be its benefit in promoting prostate health and in reducing the risk of prostate cancer. There are several reputable studies on the health benefits for Omega 3 and prostate cancer. Here is what we know so far from the studies:

#### University of California, San Francisco

One of the most promising studies about the benefits of omega-3 was conducted by researchers from the University of California, published in 2009. The investigators evaluated 466 men who had cancer and 478 healthy men. All the men were asked to complete a questionnaire about the foods they ate daily. They also were screened for a gene that is known to increase a man's risk for developing prostate cancer.

When the researchers analyzed all the collected data, **those who ate dark, fatty fish rich in EPA/DHA (e.g., salmon) had a 63 percent reduced risk of developing prostate cancer**. Men who consumed little or no EPA/DHA and who also had the gene were more likely to develop advanced prostate cancer. (Fraad et al, 2009)

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#### Harvard School of Public Health

At the Harvard School of Public Health, researchers followed more than 20,000 men to determine the relationship between prostate cancer and fish consumption. A total of 20,167 men who were part of the Physician's Health Study were evaluated. Although the investigators did not find an association between how much fish the men ate and prostate cancer, they did find that eating fish had an impact on cancer survival rates. In fact, of the men in the study who were diagnosed with prostate cancer, **those who ate fish at least five times a week had a 48 percent lower risk of dying from the disease** than the men who ate fish less than once a week. (Chavarro 2008)

#### CAPS study (Cancer Prostate in Sweden)

A large Swedish study also evaluated the relationship between intake of fatty fish and prostate cancer. A total of 1,499 men who had prostate cancer who were already part of the CAPS study (Cancer Prostate in Sweden) were monitored along with 1,130 men who were cancer-free at the beginning of the study. The researchers determined that **the risk of prostate cancer was 43 percent lower in men who consumed "salmon-like fish" one or more times per week** when compared with men who never ate that type of fatty fish.

The investigators also analyzed the men's intake of EPA and DHA and found that the

men who consumed the highest amount of marine fatty acids (both EPA and DHA) had a 30 percent less risk than men who consumed the least amount of EPA and DHA. Another finding was that men who possessed a variant of the COX-2 gene and who ate the most salmon-like fish has a 72 percent lower risk for prostate cancer when compared with men who had the COX-2 gene variant and ate the least amount of salmon-type fish. And one more thing: the researchers also determined that a high intake of linoleic acid (an omega-6 fatty acid) increased the risk of prostate cancer. (Hedelin 2007)

## Harvard School of Public Health

Researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health followed 47,866 men who had participated in the Health Professional Follow Up Study from 1986 until 2000.

(Leitzmann 2004) The men were asked to complete food-frequency questionnaires and to include specific details about their use of cooking oil, the amount of dark-meat fish they ate, and if they used fish oil supplements. In the final analysis, the researchers found that *consumption of ALA from meats, plants, and dairy sources increase the risk of advanced prostate cancer, while a high intake of EPA and DHA was associated with a decreased risk of total and advanced prostate cancer.*

## Plasma Phospholipid Fatty Acids and Prostate Cancer Risk in the SELECT Trial

This flawed study from 2013, which stated that Omega 3 might actually cause prostate cancer, made all the headlines and made men taking these supplements safely for years panic. The study was a retrospective study that was called "scientifically weak" by prostate cancer expert, Dr. Anthony Victor D'Amico. It did not show cause and effect, and this study did not account for well-known risk factors such as age, race, BMI, PSA, or DRE. It made a weak association between omega 3 and prostate cancer despite numerous studies stating the opposite. The abstract can be found [here](#).

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