

Essential Fatty Acids

Last week I started feeling stiff and achy. I was away from home so I thought it was because I was not sleeping in my own warm comfortable waterbed. When I snuggled into my own bed Saturday night, it was with the complete expectation of waking the next morning feeling great.

Imagine my disgust when I woke feeling worse! I continued to worsen until by Tuesday morning my low back hurt so badly when I woke that I was in tears before even moving. I could barely get down the stairs because my knees were so stiff and painful. It felt like the soft tissue in them was swollen and it required a lot of effort to make them bend. When they did, it felt like the bones were grinding against one another sending sharp shooting pain throughout my whole body! I felt like my mother described herself right before her knee replacement surgery. However, I know my knees are not in bad shape and I was fine until a week ago! I would have been praying for death except, during the night (which is when I always get my best answers) I experienced an epiphany!

I put on my clothes and dragged myself off to Wal-Mart at 7:00 AM because I remembered that I ran out of most of my nutritional supplements the week before and just had not made time to replace them. I needed my EFAs!

The Omega-3, Omega-6, and Omega-9 essential fatty acids are polyunsaturated fats that the body must have for good health. The Omega-3 is the most important to supplement because Omega-6 is available in a wider range of foods. In addition, if the body has Omega-3 it can make some of the others. Omega-3 is the important element in cold-water fish that makes it so healthy for us to eat. However, I do not like fish. I know it is good for me and I have really tried to make myself eat it but I just cannot! Yuck! Another good source of EFAs is dark green leafy vegetables, and flax seed and some other vegetable oils.

Both sources, fish and flax, are excellent but I've read that they have slightly different properties. In my research I could never determine which one was better than the other. I solved the conflict by taking both. I take 1200mg of each, daily. Sometimes people don't have the results from dietary supplements that they expect. Usually, it's because they don't take a large enough dose. Remember that supplements are food that helps your body to heal itself. That process takes a little while. Many people are too impatient to take things long enough to feel results.

Omega-3 fatty acids have been found to be beneficial for the Whole body. Positive effects include anti-inflammatory benefits. With reduced inflammation comes a reduction of pain and stiffness in all the muscles and joints of the body. Yes! I'm here to tell you it makes a difference! Do not believe that because your ancestors had painful arthritis you have to live with it, too. Adding enough EFAs to your diet can make a huge difference. Just imagine that those oil-filled capsules are "oiling" your squeaky joints!

Inflammation can cause or exacerbate a bunch of other problems in the body, too. When inflammation swells the soft tissue of muscles or the walls of veins and arteries it impedes blood circulation. First off, that's going to increase the blood pressure and we all know that's bad. It will also restrict the transfer of nutrients through the capillary walls to feed all the cells in the body and reduce the amount of waste products that are carried away. Think about that for a few moments and you're going to realize that your living cells may be starving while the spaces in between are clogged up with toxins. That doesn't sound very healthy!

The human body needs EFAs to manufacture and repair cell membranes, enabling the cells to obtain optimum nutrition and expel harmful waste products. This grows healthier blood cells that do their jobs instead of clumping up in places and forming life-threatening blood clots. This improves cardiovascular health by feeding the heart better while making its job easier. Heart rate improves and irregular beats will disappear. All of that reduces the risk of heart attack and strokes.

Did I mention EFAs Lower triglycerides and "bad" cholesterol (LDL) levels? I like one description I read: The essential acids attach themselves to the heavy fats and "escort" them to the liver for natural disposal. Cool!

Omega-3 deficiencies are linked to decreased memory and mental abilities, tingling sensation of the nerves and poor vision. One medical explanation is that omega-3s play a role in the fortification of the myelin sheaths on nerves and enhancing capabilities in brain cells. Apparently Omega-3s help the brain repair damage by promoting neuronal growth.

Low EFA levels have been linked to learning disorders, schizophrenia, depression, postpartum depression, ADHD, Alzheimer's disease and mental decline. Yikes! Look at this:

"A recent study discovered that, in the USA, 25% of adults tested had so little Omega-3 essential fatty acids in their blood that they were undetectable.

Hang on, 25 percent of the population in the country with the biggest incidence of depression, other psychiatric "illness", aggression, murder and childhood "behavioral issues" ...- could there be a correlation here?"

- <http://www.natural-health-information-centre.com/essential-fatty-acids.html>

When the body becomes stronger and healthier all systems will function better. Menstrual problems, causing irregularity, pain, infertility and menopausal discomfort (or insanity as some of us label it!) are improved with increased EFA levels in the blood.

All of these improvements will strengthen immune function and encourage the body to become more effective in fighting infection. Stronger cells include white blood cells and their helper T cells. Imagine all the things that will protect you from. Low EFA levels have been linked with insulin resistance, asthma, lupus, accelerated aging, obesity, diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease, ulcerative colitis, some cancers.

As soon as I got home yesterday morning, I took all my supplements. Later, in the afternoon, I took a second dose of the Flax oil and Fish oil capsules. That is the only thing I changed about my daily routine from the days before and when I woke up this morning, I felt good! I would say I am feeling about 75% better than yesterday. I thought I was feeling cranky and depressed because I was tired and in pain but maybe, that is not the whole reason. Today my attitude is very different. I'm happy and thinking much clearer than yesterday.

This morning I woke up thinking this experience was painful but highly educational. It reminded me why I take my EFAs and it motivated me to share that knowledge with you.

- If you want to start supplementing EFAs, please discuss this with your doctor and get advice on dosage. Frequent blood tests and checkups may be necessary for a while because, as your body changes, your medications will have to be adjusted. If you take blood pressure medications, the dosage may need lowered but do not do this on your own. Coumadin (a blood thinner) levels will change and it is very important for people on that medication to be tested quite often.

<http://goodfats.pamrotella.com/>

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/imagepages/19302.htm>

<http://www.natural-health-information-centre.com/essential-fatty-acids.html>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omega-3>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essential_fatty_acid

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