



WellnessLetter

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In this Issue

- *EFAs—
Indispensable
and Beneficial*
- *Key Points—
Important
Findings*
- *In the News—
Is too much
exercise
preventing
weight loss?*

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& Wellness**

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EFAs—Indispensable and Beneficial

The Important Role of Essential Fatty Acids

The fatty acids that are necessary for health and that cannot be made by the body are called essential fatty acids. EFAs help manage critical body functions such as cardiovascular, brain and nervous system functions, fat metabolism, skin health and joint flexibility. There are two families of EFAs: Omega-3s and Omega-6s.

Essential fatty acids should account for 20–30% percent of your total caloric intake. The proper ratio of Omega-6 to Omega-3 is between 1:1 and 4:1 whereas a typical American gets between 11:1 and 30:1. The simplest way to lower your intake of Omega-6 fats is to cut down on fast food and processed or manufactured food.

Omega-3 essential fatty acids are predominately found in fresh deepwater fish and some plant sources. There are three types of Omega-3 fatty acids: alpha-linoleic acid found mostly in plant sources such as flaxseed and walnut oils, eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). EPA and DHA are found predominantly in cold water fish and play a vital role in many metabolic processes. The body uses EPA and DHA more efficiently, as alpha-linoleic acid must first be converted to EPA and DHA.

Omega-3 fatty acids lower plasma triglyceride levels, particularly in people with hypertriglyceridemia, by inhibiting the synthesis of a lipoprotein, cholesterol and triglycerides in the liver. Serum triglyceride concentrations may be reduced by 25–30 percent in people who take 4g per day of Omega-3 supplements. Lower amounts of 500mg–1250mg a day may benefit people with a history of heart disease, high blood pressure, rheumatoid arthritis and those prone to depression.

For Omega-6 fatty acids, turn to raw nuts, seeds, legumes, and unsaturated vegetable oils, such as primrose oil, sesame oil, and soybean oil. There is one type of Omega-6 that may actually reduce inflammation: gamma-linoleic acid (GLA), found in black currant, borage and evening primrose oils.

Not all Omega-3 fish oil is processed the same. Check the label on your Omega-3 supplement, look at their web site and see if a third party tests and validates the ingredient components listed on the label. For more information, check out the quality control program at www.ifosprogram.com/consumer report. The International Fish Oil Standards program is an independent lab which tests and reports on each batch of [Zone Omega-3 supplements](#).

Key Points

Important Findings

We have been thrilled with the progress made by our patients at the Center for Weight Management and Wellness. We truly believe that our best client is an educated patient, so we have reviewed the progress of our patients since our opening, and we'd like to share a few key points with you:

1. Remember to stay hydrated! Start your day off with 2 glasses of water to replenish and restore your body. Two down, fourteen to go, right? There is some evidence that drinking ice-cold water may increase your metabolism, as your body will need to burn energy to warm the water.
2. Eat your breakfast! Many of our patients tell us how much better they feel when eating a breakfast containing all three macronutrients: Carbs, Protein and Fats. There is an analogy about how firing up your metabolism is similar to starting a fire, where carbs are the kindling and protein/fats are the log that sustains the flame. Just eating carbs alone will only spike your insulin and leave you hungry in a few hours. Think of refined carbs as that balled up newspaper in the fire and carbs from vegetables and fruit as true kindling. Ongoing research suggests that eating more of your calories in the morning and fewer at night will help sustain your metabolism.
3. Plan ahead! Chances are you wouldn't go on a road trip without fueling your car or at least knowing where and when you are going to refuel. Plan your meals at least one day ahead and prepare the ingredients the night before. That way, when your busy day starts you'll have no risk of missing a meal. Slice/dice/chop and store!
4. Change up your exercise routine! Your body is very efficient at preserving calories for energy, so it should not be a big surprise that doing the same exercise routine over a period of time may not contribute to lowering body fat as your body adjusts. On the treadmill or walking? Try interval walk/runs. Don't forget to exercise your upper body, and focus on core strengthening and flexibility. Our goal is not just for you to lose weight, but also to increase your lean body mass and reduce your total body fat. In the coming weeks we will be introducing a list of certified personal trainers in the area who have offered to work with our patients.

While the Center for Weight Management and Wellness incorporates guidelines from Zone Nutrition, we also continually search for cutting edge research that may help you in achieving and maintaining your goal weight. We recognize the importance of food chemistry and its effect on your overall wellness.

RJV

Is too much exercise preventing weight loss?

Exercise may help lower blood pressure by improving the function of blood vessels and relieving stress, but does it always promote weight loss? "Why Exercise Won't Make You Thin," a recent article in the August 9th issue of *Time* magazine discusses the history and science behind the relationship of exercise and weight loss. The author reviews some of the science as to why most people who exercise plateau, including an interesting view of the mind-body connection. "In short, it's what you eat, not how hard you try to work it off, that matters more in losing weight. You should exercise to improve your health, but be warned: fiery spurts of vigorous exercise could lead to weight gain." Search www.time.com for the article.

While overexercising may lead to a plateau in weight loss, a daily regimen of stretching exercises combined with a workout routine 3 times a week is still the best medicine.

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