

Omega Three Fatty Acids are essential fatty acids. This means the body cannot make them, so they must be consumed in the diet. Here is a bit of a short chemistry lesson, so please bear with me. I want you to know the terminology.

Fats are composed of fatty acids and glycerol. Fatty acids are the building blocks of dietary fat. Glycerol can carry up to three fatty acids. When one fatty acid is attached; this is a monoglyceride, two; a diglyceride, and three; a triglyceride. The fatty acids can be saturated or unsaturated. Unsaturated fats are divided into monounsaturated or polyunsaturated. These terms simply refer to the number of hydrogen atoms attached to the carbon atoms. Saturated means the carbons are completely filled with hydrogen. Unsaturated fatty acids are not completely filled with hydrogen. Omega Three Fatty Acids are polyunsaturated. Enough of the chemistry lesson, let us now move on to the next area of discussion.

Fats must be consumed for a healthy, balanced diet. Total fat should be 30 percent of total calories for the day. About 20 percent of the total fat calories should come from a combination of the two unsaturated fats. The other ten percent may come from saturated fat. Remember, fats contain nine calories per gram consumed, where protein and carbohydrates supply four calories/gram. Reducing total fat and saturated fat may reduce blood cholesterol, and this is why I mention the terms.

Omega Three Fatty Acids consist of:

Alpha-Linoleic Acid, ALA  
Docosahexanoic Acid, DHA  
Eicosapentaenoic Acid, EPA

DHA and EPA are the most important ones people should definitely include in their diets.

Omega Three Fatty Acids may help the human body in the following ways; improving immune function, being heart healthy, and decreasing inflammation. I know from personal experience fish oil helps me, especially concerning times when I ride my bicycle a great deal. My muscles feel better when I take fish oil compared to when I didn't.

It is also felt athletes who took fish oil on a regular basis had improved pulmonary (lung) function. Studies have shown improved cardiac output and resultant greater blood flow, as well. All of these are important for the athlete, especially soccer players.

I like to take in at least 500 milligrams of Omega Three's a day. Consuming fatty fish, green, leafy vegetables, walnuts, soy protein, and flaxseed oil provide sources. I also take a teaspoon of Omega Three Fatty Acid Supplement. It must be a quality fish oil, one that contains DHA and EPA.

In summary: You must consume fats for a healthy, balanced diet. Omega Three Fatty Acids may help your body in many ways, especially if you are an athlete. Heart health is also very important even if you are not actively involved in a sport, because heart disease is our number one killer. Omega Three Fatty Acids may offer heart protection, so I make sure to include them in my diet every day.

Dr. Steve Snodgrass, M.D. is a surgeon who created Dr. Steve's Pro Bites which provide a healthy, soy protein for your body. He works with patients and athletes to provide education and a protein snack to help you meet your special physical and nutritional needs. Please visit [www.probites.com](http://www.probites.com) and Sam's Club online for more information and to purchase.

Please remember: When you take great care of your body; it will take great care of you, especially when put under the stress of illness or athletic competition.

Thank you.

Dr. Steve