

## **New research: Omega-3 – Is there an alternative to fish?**

Meat, bread, oil and spreads can boost blood levels of healthy omega-3 fats and potentially ward off heart disease, according to new Australian research.

Dr Catherine Itsiopoulos and her colleagues investigated food sources of these healthy fats by randomly assigning five men and women to a high or low omega-3 diet for four weeks. The subjects were aged 40 to 65 years and had well-controlled type 2 diabetes

The high omega diet contained flaxseed meal, omega-3 enriched eggs and bread, leaner cuts of meat, canola and flaxseed oil, and fish like salmon and sardines. At the end of the study, dietary intake of omega-3 fats had increased 10-fold and blood concentrations of omega-3 had doubled.

Presenting her research at the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) National Conference in Melbourne this week, Dr Itsiopoulos said omega-3 fats have been linked with numerous health benefits, but intake is well below recommended levels in many populations.

‘Many Australians rely on fish and fish oil supplements for their omega 3 intake, but our study showed there are a number of other everyday foods that are rich sources of omega-3 fats.

‘Our research found that it is possible to boost intake and blood levels of omega-3 fats through simple diet changes, based on using breads, spreads, oils, fish and eggs. And one of the best findings was that compliance was excellent – as these are everyday foods people like to eat,’ said Dr Itsiopoulos, an Accredited Practising Dietitian.

She said research suggests omega-3 fats can help lower the risk of heart disease and may play a role in reducing the risk of major depression, and treating inflammatory diseases, like arthritis.

Tips for increasing omega-3 intake:

- Choose omega-3 enriched eggs
- Use canola oil for cooking, flaxseed oil for making dressings and mayonnaise, and extra-virgin olive oil for dipping, sprinkling and tossing onto vegetables and salads
- Use canola margarine as a spread or in baking
- Switch to omega-3 enriched wholemeal bread
- Try ground flaxseed (flaxseed meal) as a topping on breakfast cereal
- Use lean cuts of meat (beef or lamb)
- Eat two to three meals per week of oily fish (such as salmon, sardines, mackerel or tuna).

**For further information or to organise an interview contact Maree Garside,**

**Dietitians Association of Australia on 0408 482 581.**

**Note to Editors:** The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) is the professional body representing dietitians nationally. Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) is the only national credential recognised by the Australian Government, Medicare, the Department of Veterans Affairs and most private health funds as the quality standard for nutrition and dietetics services in Australia. For more information visit [www.daa.asn.au](http://www.daa.asn.au)

**Ends**

### **Background**

- The DAA National Conference is being held from May 27-29 at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre. For more information and program details, visit the conference link on the DAA website at [www.daa.asn.au](http://www.daa.asn.au)