

Short vs long chain n-3

There are many types of n-3 fatty acids. The ones we are most concerned about taking are the eicosapentaenoic acid(EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid(DHA). EPA and DHA are long chain n-3 and alpha linolenic acid (ALA) is a short chain.* ALA can be converted in the body to EPA and DHA but the process is very inefficient. A lot of products in the market list that they contain n-3's but they are short chain n-3. Flaxseed, canola, chia, walnuts, pecans, mila and acai all contain n-3 but they are the ALA type. EPA and DHA are the long chain n-3 that you want to consume due to the anti-inflammatory properties they have. Your best source of n-3 are from good quality fish oil (be sure to read the label, if they don't list EPA/DHA don't buy it) or directly from cold water oily fish such as salmon, herring, mackerel, anchovies and sardines (wild caught of course).

I take Spectrum Essentials Fish oil, it is a little expensive but has 600mg of EPA/DHA per 1000mg pill. Carlson Laboratories Fish oil is another good choice it has 1300mg of EPA/DHA per serving. It's also pretty well priced at the Vitamin Shoppe(You can thank Rick for finding that one). If you aren't eating grass-fed beef, free range chicken and wild caught fish then supplementing with good quality fish oil is very important to overall health. Our goal is to achieve at least a 1:4 ratio of n-6 to n-3 with an overall goal of 1:1.

*Short-chain EFA are 18 carbons long; long-chain EFA have 20 or more carbons.