WHAT MAKES FLAX UNIQUE?

With all the deserved fuss around the two omega-3s found in fish oil (EPA and DHA), let’s not forget that there’s a third omega-3—ALA from flaxseeds. Its healthful properties have been known and recognized for decades. Its name is alpha-linolenic acid (ALA for short)—and the best source of this vegetarian omega-3 is flax and flaxseed oil.

Alpha-linolenic acid is one of two essential fatty acids; the body can’t make it on its own, so we must get it in our diet. A percentage of ALA is converted in the body to the longer chain fatty acids we know from fish (EPA and DHA), but ALA has benefits of its own, independent of this conversion, including a reduction of cholesterol and enhanced cognitive and eye function.

Lignans: Flaxseeds’ Secret Weapon
Flaxseed oil contains substances not found in fish oil that have great significance for human health. They’re called lignans, and a large and growing body of research indicates that they have anti-cancer properties. Research from Germany suggests that a high intake of plant lignans could reduce the risk of breast cancer for pre-menopausal women by as much as 78 percent.

Quick Energy Boost
“Flaxseed oil contains ALA—a vital and essential nutrient for every cell in the body,” says Larry McCleary, MD, author of Food Your Brain, Starve Your Belly. “It is also a good source of quick energy that lasts for hours. This novel food turbo-charges the brain by providing high-octane ketone fuels that enhance thinking, improve mental energy, and suppress appetite.”

Pour Over Salads—and More
Flaxseed oil has the added advantage of being very palatable in salad dressings. You use it directly or mix with olive oil and spices. You can also mix butter and flaxseed oil in a 1:1 ratio for a fabulous spread that works on anything you would use butter for.

And then there are flaxseeds themselves, a great source of ALA, lignans, and fiber. I sprinkle Barlean’s Forti-Flax—in my opinion the highest quality flaxseed product on the market—on everything from salads to yogurt. I also put it in my smoothies and protein drinks. It’s an easy way to increase the fiber in your diet.

Go shopping!

Solgar Earth Source Organic Flaxseed Oil Contains superconcentrated omega-3 fatty acids from cold-pressed flaxseeds, as well as oleic acid, an omega-9 fatty acid.

Barlean’s Omega Swirl Omega-3 Flax Oil Supplement is great tasting, high-quality, and versatile. Use it alone, in smoothies, or drizzle over yogurt for a healthful treat.

Beveri Nutrition Golden Flaxseed provides 4 grams of dietary fiber along with 3 grams of ALA omega-3 fatty acids. Sprinkle over salads and cereals, or mix into yogurt or cottage cheese.

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