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Food Sources of Essential Fatty Acids

Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Alpha-Linolenic Acid (ALA): Flaxseeds, walnuts, and their oils are among the richest dietary sources of ALA. Canola oil is also an excellent source of ALA. Dietary surveys in the U.S. indicate that average adult intakes for ALA range from 1.2-1.6 g/day for men and from 0.9-1.1 g/day for women (1). Some foods that are rich in ALA are listed in the table below.

Some Food Sources of Alpha-linolenic Acid (18:3n-3) (216)		
Food	**Serving**	**Alpha-Linolenic acid (g)**
Flaxseed oil	1 tablespoon	7.3
Walnuts, English	1 oz	2.6
Flaxseeds, ground	1 tablespoon	1.6
Walnut oil	1 tablespoon	1.4
Canola oil	1 tablespoon	1.3
Soybean oil	1 tablespoon	0.9
Mustard oil	1 tablespoon	0.8
Tofu, firm	½ cup	0.7
Walnuts, black	1 oz	0.6

Eicosapentaenoic Acid (EPA) and Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA): Oily fish are the major dietary source of EPA and DHA. Dietary surveys in the U.S. indicate that average adult intakes of EPA range from 0.04-0.07 g/day and average adult intakes of DHA range from 0.05-0.09 g/day (1). Omega-3 fatty acid-enriched eggs are also available in the U.S. Some foods that are rich in EPA and DHA are listed in the table below.

Some Food Sources of EPA (20:5n-3) and DHA (22:6n-3) (3)				
Food	**Serving**	**EPA (g)**	**DHA (g)**	**Amount providing 1 g of EPA + DHA**
Herring, Pacific	3 oz*	1.06	0.75	1.5 oz
Salmon, chinook	3 oz	0.86	0.62	2 oz
Sardines, Pacific	3 oz	0.45	0.74	2.5 oz
Salmon, Atlantic	3 oz	0.28	0.95	2.5 oz
Oysters, Pacific	3 oz	0.75	0.43	2.5 oz
Salmon, sockeye	3 oz	0.45	0.60	3 oz
Trout, rainbow	3 oz	0.40	0.44	3.5 oz
Tuna, canned, white	3 oz	0.20	0.54	4 oz
Crab, Dungeness	3 oz	0.24	0.10	9 oz
Tuna, canned, light	3 oz	0.04	0.19	12 oz

Omega-6 Fatty *Acids*

Linoleic Acid: Food sources of LA include vegetable oils, such as soybean, safflower, and corn oil, nuts, seeds, and some vegetables. Dietary surveys in the U.S. indicate that the average adult intake of LA ranges from 12-17 g/day for men and 9-11 g/day for women (1). Some foods that are rich in LA are listed in the table below.

Some Food Sources of Linoleic Acid (18:2n-6) (216)		
Food	**Serving**	**Linoleic Acid (g)**
Safflower oil	1 tablespoon	10.1
Sunflower seeds, oil roasted	1 oz	9.7
Pine nuts	1 oz	9.4
Sunflower oil	1 tablespoon	8.9
Corn oil	1 tablespoon	7.3
Soybean oil	1 tablespoon	6.9
Pecans, oil roasted	1 oz	6.4
Brazil nuts	1 oz	5.8
Sesame oil	1 tablespoon	5.6

Arachidonic Acid: Animals, but not plants, can convert LA to AA. Therefore, AA is present in small amounts in meat, poultry, and eggs.

Source: Linus Pauling Institute