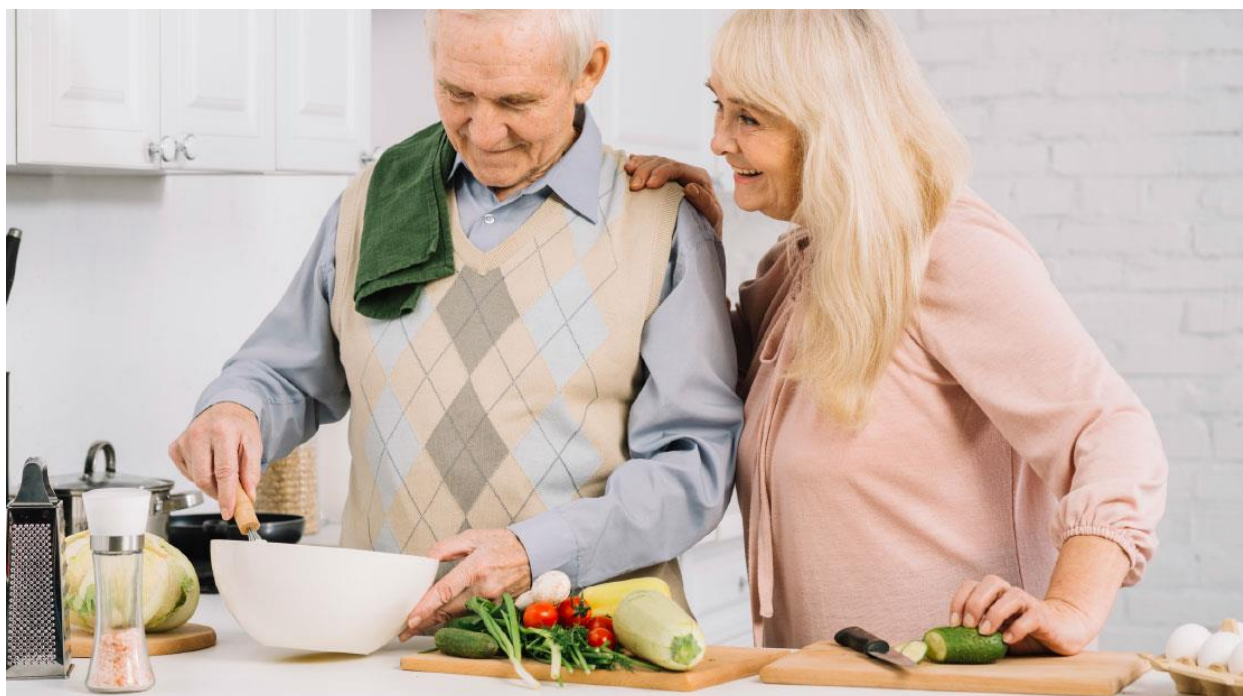


Healthy Fats for Seniors



As we age, our bodies become less active and our ability to burn off excess calories and fat will not be as efficient. Seniors should **cut down on the consumption of trans and saturated fats** as they are promoting the risk of heart disease. Thus, staying healthily by selecting the right fats and maintaining healthy weight is incredibly important for overall health and wellbeing.

Heart-Healthy Fats

Omega-3 and 6 fats are beneficial fats that are highly anti-inflammatory and contain heart – beneficial properties especially for elderlies. They **promote healthy heart and reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases**. Researches have demonstrated that omega-3 fatty acids decrease the risk of *Arrhythmias* which can lead to sudden death. In addition, Omega-3 fatty acids help in decreasing *triglyceride* levels, reducing

the growth rate of *atherosclerotic* plaque as well as lowering blood pressure (American Heart Association, 2017).

Omega-3 fatty acids benefit the heart in particularly for those who are having high risk of cardiovascular diseases. Research has shown that omega-3 fatty acids **decrease the risk of arrhythmias** (abnormal heartbeats), which can lead to sudden death. Omega-3 fatty acids also **decrease triglyceride levels, slow the growth rate of atherosclerotic plaque**, and slightly lower blood pressure.

The consumption of omega-3 fortified foods is a great option to increase EPA and DHA intake in vegans as well as individuals who dislike fish and seafood. The FDA has approved up to 3000mg/day of EPA plus DHA from food and supplements as safe (Bowen et al., 2016).

Alzheimer's disease

Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia in older adults and an important public health problem. It is a **degenerative brain disease and the most common cause of dementia**. Dementia is characterized by a decline in memory, language, problem-solving and other cognitive skills that affects a person's ability to perform daily activities due to the destruction of nerve cells of the brains (Alzheimer's Association, 2016).

Numerous dietary interventions of omega-3 fatty acids have been linked to delaying the onset of mental diseases such as Alzheimer's disease and dementia, by improving overall cognitive performance (Abubakari, et al., 2014). 24-week supplementation of DHA (0.9g per day) improved learning and memory function in age-related cognitive decline (Yurko-Mauro, et al., 2010).

In another study, patients with very mild cognitive dysfunction in the EPA and DHA supplemented group had a significant reduction in Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE), scoring a declining rate at 6 month (Freund-Levi et al., 2006).

Trans Fat

Trans-fat is the **culprit** which imparts markedly unfavorable serum lipid profiles, by increasing blood concentrations of low-density *lipoprotein* (LDL) cholesterols and *triacylglycerol* while decreasing the levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterols. Excessive consumption of trans-fat will lead to an increased risk of cardiovascular diseases (Estadella, et al., 2013) within elderlies.

The primary dietary source for trans-fats in processed food is “**partially hydrogenated oils**”. They are easy to use, inexpensive to produce and can last for a long time. Trans-fats give foods a desirable taste and texture (American Heart Association, 2017). Apart from increasing the shelf life of the hydrogenated fats, partial hydrogenation increases their melting point which provides the required texture and consistency to prepare margarines, shortenings, bakery and frying fats (Ghafoorunissa, 2008). Trans-fats can also be formed under drastic heating conditions, for example heating the oil at high temperatures or reusing the oil many times (Liu et al. 2007).

Good Fats over Bad Fats

Omegas have been widely incorporated into food and beverage applications including **bread, pasta, cereals, dairy products, eggs, meats, juices, salad dressings, spreads and oils** (Bowen et al., 2016). Omega fatty acids are essential fatty acids with diverse biological effects which exhibit great benefits in human health and are gaining public interest with evidence of health benefits in humans. There are an increasing number of people turning to supplements of fish oil and of its omega-3 poly-unsaturated fatty acids EPA and DHA.

It is crucial for seniors to cut down consumption of trans-fat as it increases the risks related to cardiovascular diseases. They contribute to the buildup of plaque inside the arteries which increase the risk for heart attack as well as diabetes and metabolic syndrome (Duyff, 2017).

You may also be interested in [Healthy Fats for Pregnancy](#), [Keto Diet for Weight Loss](#) or [Why Children Need Healthy Fat](#)

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