



# Employee WELLNESS



Florida Department of Health in Broward County

March 2017



## What are Omega-3 Fatty Acids?

Research shows that eating two 4-ounce servings of seafood per week reduces the risk of heart disease and related deaths. Many health professionals attribute this potentially life-saving quality of seafood to the presence of Omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3s are not limited to fish. They are also found in some vegetable oils, nuts, seeds and soy foods.

Fish contain two important omega-3 fatty acids: EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid). Although the research is limited, studies show that in patients with known heart disease, higher blood levels of DHA and EPA are associated with a reduction in arrhythmias (irregular heart beat) and fatal heart disease. However, the benefit of eating fish is not clear for those without known heart disease. If you have high blood triglycerides, Omega-3 supplements may help lower your levels.

**Plant-Based Omega-3s.** Some plants also contain an Omega-3 fatty acid known as ALA (alpha-linolenic acid). You can find it in vegetable oils such as canola oil, soybean oil, flaxseed oil and walnut oil. Add walnuts or ground flaxseed to cereals, yogurt and salads. Omega-3 is also found in ground flaxseeds. Whole flaxseeds do not work as well, they simply pass through the body undigested. Nibble on an Omega-3 fatty acid-rich snack such as nuts or edamame (steamed soybeans).

**Omega-3 Supplements.** Omega-3 supplements may be beneficial in combating heart disease. Studies actually show a 45-percent reduction in sudden death in people with heart disease who took EPA or DHA supplements. For some, however, there was no effect. Interestingly, there is no scientific evidence describing the advantage of Omega-3 supplements on heart disease risk for people who don't actually have heart disease. Consult a doctor to determine if you would benefit from an omega-3 supplement.

**Too Much Omega-3?** Given the fact that many of our foods are fortified with omega-3 fatty acids, it is possible to get excess amounts of it if you take additional supplements. Ask your doctor or a registered dietitian nutritionist to determine whether and at what amount an omega-3 fatty acid supplement would be helpful for you. Omega-3 fatty acid supplements should not be taken without a physician's supervision.

Reviewed by Sharon Denny, MS, RDN



"Every time you eat or drink, you are either feeding disease or fighting it."

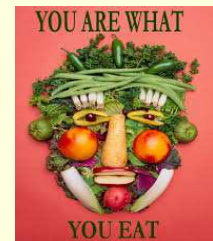
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# Processed food: What's OK and what to avoid



Processed food has been blamed for our nation's obesity epidemic, high blood pressure and the rise of Type 2 diabetes. But processed food is more than boxed macaroni and cheese, potato chips and drive-thru hamburgers. It may be a surprise to learn that whole-wheat bread, homemade soup or a chopped apple also are processed foods. While some processed foods should be consumed with caution, many actually have a place in a balanced diet. Here's how to sort the nutritious from the not-so-nutritious.



## What Is Processed Food?

"The term processed food includes any food that has been purposely changed in some way prior to consumption," says Torey Armul, MS, RD, CSSD, LDN. "It includes food that has been cooked, canned, frozen, packaged or changed in nutritional composition with fortifying, preserving or preparing in different ways." Processed food falls on a spectrum from minimally to heavily processed:

- **Minimally processed**, such as bagged spinach, cut vegetables and roasted nuts, are pre-prepped for convenience.
- **Foods processed at their peak** to lock in nutritional quality and freshness include canned tomatoes, frozen fruit and vegetables, and canned tuna.
- **Foods with ingredients** added for flavor and texture (sweeteners, spices, oils, colors and preservatives) include jarred pasta sauce, salad dressing, yogurt and cake mixes.
- **Ready-to-eat foods**, such as crackers, granola and deli meat, are more heavily processed.
- **Heavily processed foods** often are pre-made meals including frozen pizza and microwaveable dinners.

Processed food can be beneficial to your diet. Milk and juices sometimes are fortified with calcium and vitamin D, and breakfast cereals may have added fiber. Canned fruit (packed in water or its own juice) is a good option when fresh fruit is not available. Some minimally processed food such as pre-cut vegetables are quality convenience foods for busy people.

**Look for Hidden Sugar, Sodium and Fat.** Eating processed food in moderation is fine, but consumers should be on the lookout for hidden sugar, sodium and fat. **Sugars** are any sugar that is not naturally occurring in the food and has been added manually. Added sugars often are used in low-fat foods to improve taste and consistency. Compare food labels to find the product with more protein and fiber and less saturated fat and sugars. Added sugars aren't just hidden in processed sweets. They're added to bread to give it an appealing browned hue, and there often is a surprising amount added to jarred pasta sauces and cereal. The grams of carbohydrate on the Nutrition Facts Label also includes naturally occurring sugars which may be a significant amount in foods such as yogurt and fruit.

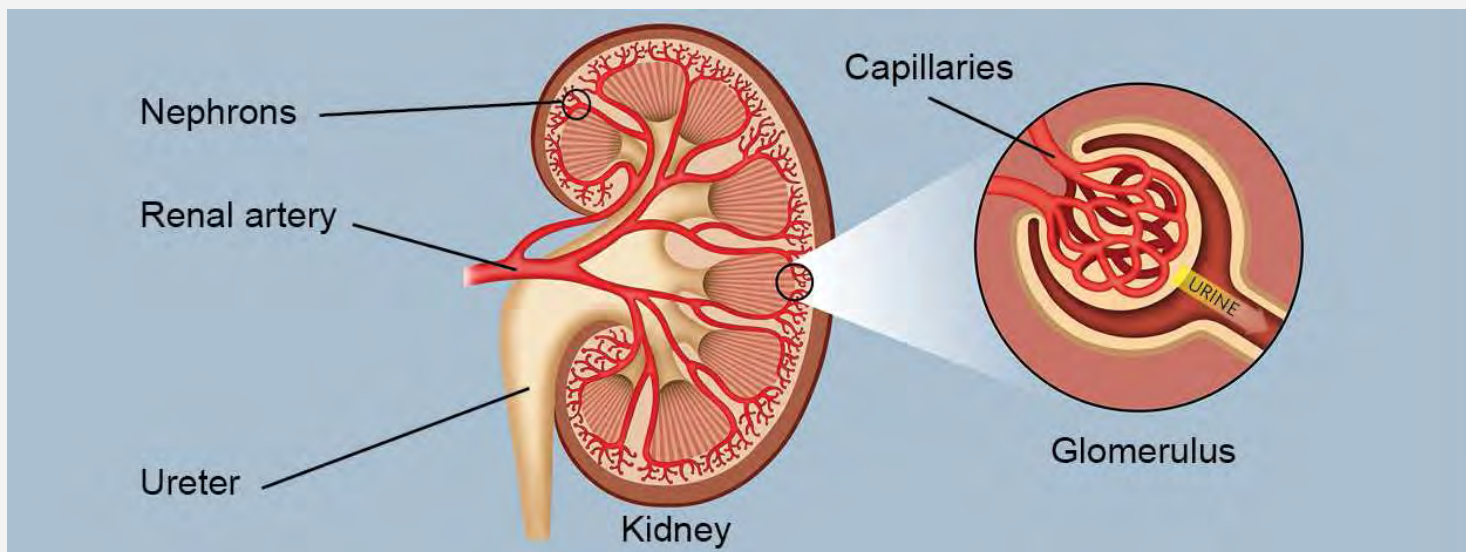
**Sodium.**—Most canned vegetables, soups and sauces have added salt. Processed foods are major contributors of sodium in our diets, because salt is commonly added to preserve foods and extend shelf life. Choose foods labeled no salt added, low-sodium or reduced-sodium to decrease the amount of salt you're consuming from processed foods."

**Fats.**— Added fats can help make food shelf-stable and give it body. Trans fats (which raise our bad cholesterol while lowering our good cholesterol ) are on the decline in processed foods, but you should still read food labels.

"The FDA has banned artificial trans fats from the food supply, but companies have until 2018 to comply," says Armul. "In the meantime, check both the Nutrition Facts Label and ingredient list for trans fats. Look for zero grams of trans fats on the label and no partially hydrogenated oils in the ingredient list. These oils contain trans fat, which does not have to be listed on the Nutrition Facts Label if it amounts to less than 0.5 grams per serving. However, even this amount is not safe to consume. If the food lists partially hydrogenated oil as an ingredient, put it back."

*Reviewed by Taylor Wolfram, MS, RDN, LDN. <http://www.eatright.org/resource/food/nutrition/nutrition-facts-and-food-labels/avoiding-processed-foods>*





## Why Are the Kidneys So Important?

Most people know that a major function of the kidneys is to remove waste products and excess fluid from the body. These waste products and excess fluid are removed through the urine. The production of urine involves highly complex steps of excretion and re-absorption. The critical regulation of the body's salt, potassium and acid content is performed by the kidneys. The kidneys also produce hormones that affect the function of other organs. The kidneys are powerful chemical factories that perform the following functions: remove waste products from the body, remove drugs from the body, balance the body's fluids, release hormones that regulate blood pressure, produce an active form of vitamin D that promotes strong, healthy bones and control the production of red blood cells

**Where Are the Kidneys and How Do They Function?** There are two kidneys, each about the size of a fist, located on either side of the spine at the lowest level of the rib cage. Each kidney contains up to a million functioning units called nephrons. A nephron consists of a filtering unit of tiny blood vessels called a glomerulus attached to a tubule. When blood enters the glomerulus, it is filtered and the remaining fluid then passes along the tubule. In the tubule, chemicals and water are either added to or removed from this filtered fluid according to the body's needs, the final product being the urine we excrete.

**What Are Some of the Causes of Chronic Kidney Disease?** There are many causes of chronic kidney disease. The kidneys may be affected by diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure. Some kidney conditions are inherited (run in families). Others are congenital; that is, individuals may be born with an abnormality that can affect their kidneys.

Kidney stones are very common, and when they pass, they may cause severe pain in your back and side. There are many possible causes of kidney stones, including an inherited disorder that causes too much calcium to be absorbed from foods, as well as urinary tract infections or obstructions.

Urinary tract infections occur when germs enter the urinary tract and cause symptoms such as pain and/or burning during urination and more frequent need to urinate. These infections most often affect the bladder, but they sometimes spread to the kidneys, and they may cause fever and pain in your back.

Go to <https://www.kidney.org/category/kidney-basics> to read this article in full and much more information and help regards to kidney/renal disease.



A positive lifestyle change is another step in making Florida the Healthiest State in the Nation.







# Healthy Eats

## Ingredients

- 4 small red potatoes
- 1/3 pound fresh green beans, trimmed
- 12 oz can light tuna packed in water, drained
- 1/2 cup diced red onion
- 2 large tomatoes seeded and diced
- 5 cups romaine lettuce
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/4 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- Salt and Pepper to taste



## Nicoise Salad

### Directions



The Nicoise salad incorporates a fresh plate, high in Omega-3 fatty oils and everything that is in season. Make it your own. Perfect for the extra potatoes and beans from the night before. This is so versatile depending on what you enjoy, add avocado, red peppers or beans. Serves 4.

Boil water in a large pot with a fitted steamer basket. Put the potatoes in the steamer, cover and steam for 15 minutes. Add the green beans and steam for 6 minutes more. Put the cooked potatoes and beans in a dish and set in the refrigerator to cool.

Put tuna, olives, onion, tomato and lettuce in a large bowl. Dice the potatoes and green beans, add them to the bowl and toss. You can also serve the salad as it is displayed in the photo.

In a small bowl whisk together the oil, lemon juice, mustard, salt and pepper. Pour the dressing over the salad, toss well and serve.

### *What's in season? Fresh from Florida:*

Avocado	Bell Pepper	Broccoli
Cabbage	Cauliflower	Celery
Eggplant	Grapefruit	Guava
Lettuce	Mushroom	Orange
Peanut	Radish	Strawberry
Tangerine	Tomato	Snap Bean
Squash	Papaya	Potato



# Back page Story:

## Savvy Shopper



Through the years one thing I've learned is to be a savvy shopper. How often have we heard: Don't go grocery shopping on an empty stomach? It's true, it can lead you into all sorts of temptations, the smell from the bakery or that fried chicken. Walk away! If you have a grocery list you are already a star! Organize your list into sections such as produce, dairy etc. I shop the perimeter of the grocery store first of all. Most of the time that's all I need for my family. When I go the middle aisles, I'll pick up a few items like coffee, canned goods such as beans, tomatoes (petit diced low sodium of course) for soups and stews and chicken or vegetable stock. I pick up fresh produce and meat/fish. I keep track of the sell by date so that I know when I will use those products. I hate wasting food. By the time the weekend rolls around the fridge and the cabinets are bare. Just the way I like it.

I love the produce department- so colorful and full of nutrients. Each color reflects the different vitamin, mineral, and phytonutrient content of each fruit or vegetable. This is something that I didn't grow up with but I have developed a taste for through the years. I will venture out and try something different. I love new recipes from different cultures. On Sundays I make a big salad, ready to go for dinner and lunch the next day. If you work a little upfront it's easier to stay on track. When I know if I'm going to make baked potatoes or roast a chicken breast, I will also roast up some vegetables at the same time.

I like to feel that what I am putting into my body is nourishment, that it has value and that it is doing my body good. Don't get me wrong, I love my chocolate and ice cream but I try to keep that in small portions, if I buy it. If it is in the house, I eat it. So I try not to have those temptations. Don't forget your dairy products, low fat milk for your cereal is a perfect way to get the calcium you need. Add a banana and your all set to start your day. Yogurt comes in so many forms now but check the sugar content. Currently my favorite yogurt is made with whole milk, plain then I will add fresh strawberries or a little honey. Try it.

When it comes to bread I look for high fiber, low sugar. Just because it says whole wheat doesn't mean that it is good for you. It is so important to read all labels. You will be stunned to see the amount of sugar it contains. It takes a bit of time at first, but then you find a product that suits you and stick with it. It's easy. Your palate adjusts quicker than you think.

If you are looking for frozen meals as a quick go-to for lunch at work, the best options are the meals low in carbs and high in protein. — Kristin Halldorsdottir, ext.:3009

**SMALL  
PROGRESS  
IS STILL  
PROGRESS**

### Exercises to relieve back pain at work



Please consult your healthcare provider before starting any diet or exercise program.

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DOH-Broward Employee Wellness



**The Walking Club,  
meets at noon in front of  
the Administration Building every  
Monday, Wednesday and Friday.  
Mark your calendars!**

