

HEALTH PERSPECTIVES

"Practical Insights Into The World Of Natural Healing."

Flaxseed Oil

Filling A Vital Need

by Don Bodenbach

Fresh flaxseed oil is considered to be the very best oil for human nutrition. Its value lies in a very rich supply of the two essential fatty acids, linolenic and linoleic acid. What is unique about flaxseed oil is its high content of linolenic acid. At 50 to 60% it is by far the world's most abundant source. There are hundreds of fatty acids found in nature, only linolenic and linoleic acids are considered essential. This means that you must have them to live and to remain healthy. They must also be obtained from food because your body cannot synthesize them.

Essential fatty acids (EFA's) have several vital functions. First, they increase metabolic rate, improve metabolism, increase oxygen uptake, and increase energy production. Second EFA's and their derivatives are components of membranes that surround each cell. Lack of EFA's cause cells to "leak." Harmful things can get into the cell and beneficial things can get out. Third, they are required for the transport and metabolism of cholesterol and triglycerides. They can lower high cholesterol levels by 25% and high triglycerides by 65%. Fourth, they are required for the normal development of the brain. In the adult they are required for brain function. Linolenic acid is particularly important for this.

Finally, from EFA's the body makes hormone-like substances called

prostaglandins. Just like the parent substances they are made from, prostaglandins have very important regulating functions in the body. They regulate arterial muscle tone, sodium excretion through the kidneys, platelet stickiness, inflammatory response and immune functions. Much research is currently being conducted on prostaglandins because of these important functions. Several large scale nutritional surveys have shown that over 60% of the North American population is deficient in the EFA's (linolenic acid more so than linoleic acid). Heart disease and cancer, both considered linked to fatty degeneration, comprise approximately 73% of deaths from degenerative disease in North America. It appears that fat and oil nutrition has been neglected far too long.

This is not so anymore. A great deal has been learned about the reasons for widespread essential fatty acid deficiencies and the problems of fatty degeneration. The main culprit is the massive oil industry. In an effort to meet supply and demand, an elaborate refining process was developed. As you may have already figured out, by the time the oil has been heated, degummed, bleached, deodorized and synthetic antioxidants have been added, there is very little nutritional value left.

The problem does not stop there. The EFA's in oil that have been subject to the

refining process function differently in the body than the EFA's found in fresh, unrefined oils. The altered EFA's can fit into the same metabolic pathways, but cannot carry out the same vital biochemical functions. Not only is it difficult to get adequate EFA's from our food, but any altered and refined oils we eat literally block the supplies we do get. We must eliminate both problems to get the full benefit that EFA's offer.

No other oil can correct the deficiency as well as fresh flax oil. It contains approximately 70-80% EFA's with the majority being the hard to get linolenic acid. It is best to consider flaxseed oil as a dietary supplement. One tablespoon full per day is the average adult recommendation. It should never be heated. It is absolutely imperative that flaxseed oil be fresh. It must be pressed by specialized equipment that prevents damage from light, air and heat. It must be stored in containers that exclude light and oxygen and must be refrigerated. These steps will ensure freshness. Expiration dates should appear on the containers.

The world's leading authority on flaxseed oil, Dr. Johanna Budwig of Germany, who has been treating degenerative diseases for 30 years, recommends taking flaxseed oil with yogurt or cottage cheese (nonfat or low-fat). There are special proteins in these dairy products that enhance the properties of the EFA's. Dr. Budwig has had amazing success using her oil-protein combination. For additional information on Dr. Budwig and flax oil we highly recommend you read "*Flax Oil as a True Aid Against Arthritis, Heart Infarction, Cancer and Other Diseases*".

There are several flaxseed oils on the market which can be found in the refrigerated section of your health food store. Two final recommendations: To help you get the most out of flaxseed oil try to limit or

eliminate refined oils from your diet. This includes hydrogenated oils. Remember, these oils are metabolized in the same pathways as the natural oils and block their functions. Second, EFA's require several nutrients to be metabolized correctly. A good multivitamin and mineral supplement is recommended. Vitamins A, C, E, B-2, B-3, B-6, Pantothenic acid, B-12, biotin, and minerals calcium, magnesium, potassium, sulfur, and zinc are all involved in EFA metabolism. Improved fat and oil nutrition can be of great benefit to us all.

The best of health to you.



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