Yet another reason to love Consumer Labs: Their latest fish oil review

April 9, 2014 By Mike Barr

I honestly can't keep up with Dr. Oz's daily trend-making recommendations. I think it was a year or two ago that he implored us all to jump on the krill oil bandwagon. Most people I know are getting their (yes, super trendy) omega threes from flaxseed or, less commonly, evening primrose oil (EPO) and/or borage oil.

But there seems to be an increasing amount of evidence (should I write "evidence"?) that fish or at least "marine" (which I guess includes algae and other sea critters that are not technically fish) sources might be superior to the seed sources.

I am interested in this only because there seems to be a potential use (or at least potential benefit with sufficient probability to explore) in cardiovascular health, cognitive function (especially in the elderly), depression and/or other mood disorders and possibly even dermatology! So I wanted to know more.

Behold, appears in my Inbox last week Consumer Labs' up-to-the minute review and thoughtful discussion of all of the aforementioned. Super helpful, super thorough, super credible--and with even a twist of bitchiness is one looks closely enough! I particularly enjoyed that.

This post threatens to grow unmanageable, so let me try to give away the ending here:

Bottom Line

Marine (includes fish, algae, krill) sources of EPA and DHA oils "offer a wide range of potential benefits" for

- mental health
- treating inflammatory diseases (which would include some skin problems)
- "and even cancer prevention"

Importantly, they conclude that where cardiovascular health is concerned, eating fish twice (or more) weekly is more effective than taking fish oil supplements.

Here are the recommended dietary sources of oily fish (per AHA):

- anchovy
- bluefish
- carp
- catfish
- halibut
- herring
- lake trout
- mackerel
- pompano
- salmon (farmed likely to have higher levels of PCBs)
- striped sea bass
- albacore tuna (mercury concern)
- whitefish

Dose (and relative proportion, EPA to DHA) appears to Important. And MORE IS NOT NECESSARILY BETTER. (Large doses (>2-3g per day) have been shown to suppress immunity. Source cited for this is an animal study: Fenton, Prostag Leukotri EFAs, 2013.

That said, I recall reading (but cannot find source/citation just now, I am thinking it was Dr Dickson Thom, a naturopathic physician from this weekend seminar I attended recently) that if one is using fish oil for dermatologic indications (for example, eczema or other stubborn rash), twice the 1,000 mg daily dose (i.e., 2g daily) is recommended. I will look for the source.

Mehmet's fancy krill oil is, not surprisingly, the costliest of all the options. And there doesn't seem to be much evidence that it is superior to the others. The only difference is the inclusion of the antioxidant carotenoid phytochemical called *astaxanthin*. But the CL watchdogs have discovered that only really 1-2 companies actually have krill oil with this rhapsodized constituent naturally occurring. That's right, the others ADD IT IN after the fact!

I will have to summarize the rest (and there is so much to tell!) tomorrow. If you are feeling flush with cash, you can become a CL member supporter and read it all first-hand today. I think a year's access only sets you back sixty bucks. And now I see they have NPR type options where they bill you $2.46-3.00 a month, depending on whether you opt for 12-month or 24-month commitment.

https://www.consumerlab.com

I see they also just did a review of 41 different "probiotic" products. (I can explain the quotation

marks later.) Will have to get to that later this month.

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