

# FISH OIL 101

Expert information about the common dietary supplement that may sharpen focus in ADHD children and adults



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- The essential ingredient in fish oil is **omega-3 fatty acids**, which are believed to bolster brain and nerve cell function – sharpening mental focus
- Some studies suggest that omega-3 fatty acids break down faster in ADHD bodies, making them especially helpful to children and adults with attention deficit disorder. Also, omega-3s boost the body's synthesis of **dopamine**, the neurotransmitter that many ADHD medications act to increase
- Foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids include fatty fish such as sardines, tuna and salmon. To avoid excess mercury in your diet, eat no more than two to three servings of fish each week and supplement with a **mercury-free fish-oil capsule**
- Children may take up to **2.5 grams** of fish oil each day; adults may take up to **5 grams**
- Fish oil contains two main types of omega-3 fatty acids: eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). When choosing a fish-oil capsule, look for one that contains at least **three times the amount of EPA to DHA** because some studies suggest that pills with higher ratios of EPA better improve ADHD symptoms including mood swings and aggression
- It may take ADHD patients up to **six weeks** to see the benefits of fish oil
- Be aware that high doses of omega-3s may cause nausea, diarrhea, and other gastrointestinal discomfort. **Consult your doctor before adding this supplement to your routine**

*If you are having problems with your ADD/ADHD prescriptions or have any concerns requiring immediate attention, **please consult your doctor as soon as possible** or dial your local crisis intervention hotline. The information above is not designed to replace your doctor's advice and counsel.*

To learn more about AD/HD, go to [www.additudemag.com](http://www.additudemag.com).

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