



Omega-3 & Postpartum Depression

It is known that women have a six fold increased risk for serious mood disorders following childbirth. This risk generally remains quite high for at least two years. Because breast-feeding women are passing on their essential fatty acids to their newborns, it is quite common for mothers to have depleted their own omega-3 fatty acids.

Omega-3 fatty acids are essential to the normal brain development of the newborn, especially during the last three months of pregnancy when the brain of the unborn baby increases threefold, notes Artemis Simopolous, M. D. , one of the world 's leading experts on omega-3 fatty acids and human health. If women neglect to take in enough such essential fatty acids, the unborn baby will rob the mother of these nutrients from her own brain tissues. Modern laboratory testing shows new mothers have only half the normal blood levels of omega-3 fatty acids.

Yet, paradoxically, omega-3 fatty acids also are essential to normalizing mood and behavior in adults. Our first clue comes from epidemiological work that has found the lowest rates of depression worldwide seem to be correlated with the amount of fish consumed per capita. Seafood is one of the prime sources of omega-3 fatty acids, however, supplementation with fresh flax oil is an excellent alternative. It is also known that depressed patients

have very low levels of a type of omega-3 fatty acid known as eicosapentanoic acid in their plasma and red blood cells. Cutting edge research has also recently pinpointed among depressed persons marked depletions of omega-3 fatty acids in phospholipid membranes of red blood cells (which are thought to hold similar fatty acid concentrations as in nerve cell membranes).

How to Find the Best Lignan-Rich Flax Oil

Be sure the company that produces your flax is M. A. D. about fresh lignan-rich flax oil. Here 's what to look for when it comes to being M. A. D. about fresh flax:

Made To Order

Be sure your flax oil is made to order. Most flaxseed oil today is dated for freshness for up to one year. This is too long for a perishable electron-rich live food, like flaxseed oil. What 's more, these products are typically shipped by ground transportation resulting in prolonged delivery and conditions such as high heat that may degrade the oil. Worse yet, some companies have resorted to refining and or filtering their oil in order to artificially extend shelf life. Be sure your flax oil is pressed the day it is ordered.

Dated For Freshness

Be sure your flax oil comes coded with both a Fresh Pressed date and a Freshest Before date stamp spanning a period of only four months for maximum potency and freshness. Prolonged distributor delivery and warehoused product makes it necessary for other brands to date stamp their oil for six to twelve months. Good for them, not so good for you.

We call this service Fresh ExPress and it guarantees you the absolute freshest flax oil anywhere. You will find this type of extremely high-quality lignan-rich flax oil in the refrigerator sections of natural health centers nationwide.

The Doctors Prescription

Nursing mothers may have even lower levels of essential fatty acids, unless they supplement. We recommend that pregnant and nursing women take one to two tablespoons daily of lignan- rich flax oil mixed with yogurt or orange juice, or used as an ingredient in salad dressings. Pregnant women and nursing mothers should also consume safe seafood (e. g. , salmon)or take fish oil capsules guaranteed to be free from toxic pollutants.

References:

1. Gitlin, M. J. &Pasnau, R. O. *Psychiatric syndromes linked to reproductive function in women:A review of current knowledge. Am J Psychiatry, 1989;146(11):1413-1422.*
2. Holman, R. T. , et al. *Deficiency of essential fatty acids and membrane fluidity during pregnancy and*

lactation. Proc Natl Acad Sci, 1991;88:4835-4839.

3. Hibbeln, J. R. *Fish consumption and major depression. Lancet, 1998;351:1213.*

4. Mes, M. , et al. *Fatty acid composition in major depression: Decreased omega-3 fractions in cholesteryl esters and increased C20:4 omega 6/C20:5 omega 3 ratio in cholesteryl esters and phospholipids. J Affect Disord, 1996;38:35-46.*

5. Adams, P. B. , et al. *Arachadonic acid to eicosapentaneic acid ratio in blood correlates positively with clinical symptoms of depression. Lipids, 1996;31(suppl):S157-S161.*

6. Edwards, R. , et al. *Omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids in the diet and in the red blood cell membranes of depressed patients. J Affect Disord, 1998;48:149-155.*