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Fishing for Health

I hope you ordered several packages of the salmon filets for this month! Those of you who did so may have some extra years to enjoy your local fishing hole. Study after study keep telling us that people who eat more fish are less likely to die from cardiac arrest, and to have fewer heart attacks over all. They usually have less atherosclerosis as well. The protection comes from the special fats that fatty fish living in cold water make to keep themselves mobile.

How much fish the doctor should write on your prescription is still being discussed. But, women and men who ate fish once or more a week had barely half the number of cardiac arrests that the men who only ate it once a month had. That's a very impressive difference. These numbers came from studies that lasted 11 years with 20,000 men and 16 years with 84,000 women, so it's very strong evidence too.

The one exception is that people who depended on fish sticks and fast food fish sandwiches, in other words, fried fish, did not get any benefit. The added fat from frying the fish seems to have canceled out the benefit of the fish itself. Or, the fish used for these fried products didn't have enough of the good fats in them to make a difference.

Baking or broiling the fish not only gives us the benefits of fish oils, these methods don't require adding more fat. Cutting out the added fats can help us maintain a healthy weight as well. We get the protein, the minerals and the natural fish oils, without extra calories.

And back to the salmon in this month's order, it's one of the best sources for the omega-3 fats that are so helpful. Only herring and sardines have more omega-3s per ounce than salmon. A single 3-oz serving of salmon provides about 1,100 mg of omega-3 fats. Try to vary your diet so you aren't depending on just one kind of fish all the time. And talk to your doctor about your other medications and conditions before you decide to try fish oil supplements. They can carry some risks of their own.