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### Here Fishy, Fishy!

If you're concerned about your heart health or your brain health, calling more fish into your menu and onto your plate is a smart move. The evidence from large population studies is very strong. People who eat more fish are generally healthier, live longer, and have better memories and brain function in those later years of life.

Some of the benefit surely comes from omega-3 fatty acids. The two most important ones have names so long that they go by their initials - DHA and EPA. These fats are not found in walnuts, flaxseed or most other plants. The omega-3 fats from the nuts and seeds are mostly ALA. While ALA helps with blood pressure, it does not have the brain benefits the DHA and EPA from fish have. In general, fish that live mostly in cold water have more of the beneficial fat. The most common of these are salmon and mackerel.

Some of the benefit of eating fish is due to the fact that fish in general have less fat than red meat. That makes it easy to understand why breaded and fried fish does not help us much. A fast food fish sandwich or fried fish sticks have too much added fat. The breading helps trap and hold more fat. A lot of it is saturated, hydrogenated or inter-esterified fat, all of which are not good for us. Grill, bake or broil your fish. Or pan fry it in a non-stick pan or with pan spray, not loads of butter or oil.

Some people worry about mercury or pesticides in fish. But the benefits of eating fish are much greater than the danger from these contaminants. There are two very good, and easy ways, to cut down on the chances you'll get too much contamination.

One is to eat a variety of fish. Have tuna one time, salmon the next, catfish the

next and tilapia the next time. If you eat many kinds of fish, from many different places, the chances you'll get so much pesticide or mercury are much lower.

The other way to decrease your chances of danger is to eat canned fish. Canned tuna or salmon usually has less contamination than whole fish or fillets. This is because it's the little fish that end up in cans. Only large fish are sold whole or in fillets or steaks. Smaller fish have been swimming in contaminated water for less time. They've had less time to get contaminated from the water. And they've eaten fewer contaminated fish, so they didn't accumulate so much from their food.

So eat a variety of fish, several times a week. You'll have more years to enjoy your meals!

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