

Media Release

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Australians still lacking in omega-3

Recent research coming out of the University of Wollongong's School of Medicine found that only 20% of Australians meet the recommended intake of the most beneficial type of omega-3. In response to this, Mr Carl Gibson, chief executive officer of Complementary Medicines Australia said, "the result demonstrates that the majority of Australians still follow a typical Western diet, very high in omega-6 and low in omega-3, or good fats, which is linked to many chronic disease including cardiovascular disease, diabetes and colorectal cancer, just to name a few."

The research, published in *Nutrients* and based upon the 2011-2012 National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey, was conducted to examine if Australians are currently meeting the recommended intake for beneficial omega-3 and if intake has increased since the last National Nutrition Survey in 1995.

"The results revealed that although beneficial omega-3 intake has increased, 80% of Australians are still not meeting recommended levels for optimal health and only 10% of women of childbearing age met the recommended docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) intake."

The study indicates that the main reason for the increased intake of beneficial omega-3 is an increase in supplements, given that fish consumption (the major dietary sources of beneficial omega-3) has not changed since 1995. Further, for those adults consuming omega-3 supplements approximately 50% are meeting the recommended intake, while for those not consuming supplements, only about 10% are meeting the recommended intake.

"This is a great example that demonstrates Australians' growing use and acceptance of complementary medicines. Many Australians are aware that their diets are not as good as they should be, and now recognise that omega-3 is essential for optimal health yet is significantly lacking in their diet. In fact, for those 65 and over, the portion of omega-3 coming from supplements is 40%."

"While it is very important to obtain enough beneficial omega-3, including DHA, from your diet, supplementation can be of a great assistance in maintaining optimal health," concluded Mr. Gibson.

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