



## **New York Times Well Blog Response to Fish Oil Claims**

On March 30<sup>th</sup>, the *New York Times* Well Blog wrote a post entitled, [“Fish Oil Claims Not Supported by Research,”](#) claiming that the vast majority of clinical trials involving fish oil supplementation have found no evidence that it lowers the risk of heart attack and stroke. The post generated significant commentary and subsequent coverage by other recognized media, including *Yahoo Health* and ABC News’ Good Morning America.

The mission of the Global Nutrition and Health Alliance (GNHA) is to educate consumers and healthcare professionals about optimal nutrition; including the use of vitamin, minerals and supplements as part of a healthy lifestyle. In particular, the GNHA has focused efforts on the value of achieving daily recommended intakes of omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA (eicosapentaenoic acid and docosahexaenoic acid) found primarily in fish and fish oil supplements and vitamin D; both nutrients are crucial for optimal health, but often deficient in the average person’s diet. Therefore, we feel obligated to provide a scientific interpretation of the recent media coverage to help consumers and healthcare professionals.

Statement by the co-founding members\* of the Global Nutrition and Health Alliance:

*“Mainstream media have a responsibility to look beyond sensational headlines when discussing the benefits of omega-3 supplementation; because the reality is, it is difficult to consume enough of the nutrient via diet alone. Furthermore, numerous studies have shown that low intakes of omega-3 fatty acids are associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease and possibly cognitive impairment. The GNHA would like to discuss limitations in the available cardiovascular clinical trials of fish oil. The trials have largely focused on secondary prevention – that is, subjects in the study already have cardiovascular disease.*

*When these trials were designed, baseline dietary intakes of omega-3 fatty acids were not accounted for, appropriate dosages were not provided, length of treatment was inadequate, the form of the fish oils provided and the timing were not optimal for absorption. By ignoring these key factors, there is a bias that results that can indicate studies with no effect when there may actually be one there.*

*The 2010 Dietary Guidelines recommend Americans consume 8 ounces of fatty fish per week. Less than half of Americans meet this recommendation. Professional insights and national data both suggest that it is very difficult for Americans to reach the recommended amounts of omega-3 fatty acids from the diet alone. Therefore, for the vast majority of individuals concerned about cardiovascular health, mental health and general well-being, taking a supplement has very little risk and proven benefits.”*

For more information, as well as a summary showing that “every meta-analysis of the gold-standard human clinical trials published in the last 10 years consistently finds a significant benefit to omega-3

consumption for cardiac (or coronary) death risk” visit the industry website from [GOED \(Global Organization for EPA and DHA Omega-3s\)](#). “Data from all of these studies show fish oil consumption reduces cardiac death risk between approximately 10 and 30 percent.”

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