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Cooking Tips To Get the Most of Your Omega-3s

If you've been eating more fish to get the heart-health benefits of omega-3 fatty acids, you may want to take a look at your recipe file. It turns out that while some methods of cooking fish could reduce the risk of heart disease, others could actually have the opposite effect.

"It appears that boiling or baking fish with low-sodium soy sauce (shoyu) and tofu is beneficial, while eating fried, salted or dried fish is not," explains Lixin Meng, M.S., lead researcher of a new study presented at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2009. The findings can help educate people on the best way to prepare fish to prevent heart disease, Meng says.

Omega-3 fatty acids are an essential nutrient found in a variety of foods, including tofu, walnuts, flaxseed oil, and fatty fish such as herring, sardines and mackerel. The AHA recommends people without a history of coronary disease [eat two servings of fish](#) each week to get the full benefit of omega-3s, including:

- decreased risk of arrhythmias, which can lead to sudden cardiac death
- decreased triglyceride levels
- decreased growth rate of atherosclerotic plaque
- lower blood pressure

Interestingly, certain ethnic groups could benefit from the fatty acids in fish more than others. The study showed that Caucasian, Japanese-American and Latino men had a lower risk of heart disease as a result of eating fish rich in omega-3s than African-American or Hawaiian men. However, researchers were uncertain whether the differences stemmed from how the fish was prepared or genetic predisposition.

Still, regardless of your gender or ethnicity, fish high in omega-3s offer definite cardiovascular benefits when cooked up right. Likewise, omega-3 fatty acid supplements can reduce cardiovascular events, like nonfatal heart attacks or strokes, and can also slow the progression of atherosclerosis in coronary patients. Of course, you should always speak with your doctor before making any changes to your diet.

[Read the press release about this study](#)

[Learn how omega-3 fatty acids can benefit your heart health](#)

This article first appeared in the January 2010 My Heart News e-newsletters. [Subscribe now or review past issues.](#)

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