

## **For Immediate Release**

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## **North American Children are Omega-3 Deficient and may be at risk for Suboptimal Health**

*Researchers express concern for low intake of Omega-3 EPA/DHA amongst children*

A recent study published in the Journal of Nutrition found that most Canadian children are deficient in Omega-3 EPA/DHA. The study found that 78% of the children trialed were not receiving adequate amounts of Omega-3 EPA and DHA in their diets.

Researchers from the University of Guelph in Ontario found that the median daily consumption of Omega-3 EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) was only 31.5 mg, in a sample group of four to eight year olds. In this study researchers used the suggested daily intake recommended by the Institute of Medicine which is only 90 mg of Omega-3 EPA/DHA per day. Even using this low recommendation level, the study shows that 78% of the sampled Canadian children were well below the recommended level. The study also notes that the recommendation by the American Dietician Association and the Dieticians of Canada is 351 mg of EPA/DHA per day. Based on this recommendation 90% of the children in the study were deficient in Omega-3 EPA/DHA. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services indicates that in the United States the average consumption of Omega-3 EPA/DHA for children four to eight years of age is only 50 mg/day. Therefore, although the study only involved Canadian children, we know that American children are also well below the recommended levels.

Omega-3 EPA/DHA is essential at all stages of life. For infants up to the age of three, DHA is essential for the development of the brain and eyes. After the age of three, both EPA and DHA are important for cognitive function, and research suggests that it may improve behavior and learning disorders, including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD). Additionally research indicates that Omega-3 EPA/DHA may reduce inflammatory conditions such as asthma, childhood depression, and reduce the risk of type 1 diabetes.

The researchers from Guelph University concluded “There is an apparent need to create greater awareness of the importance of the long-chain (LC) omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA) among both health professionals and the general public as well as the existing gap between actual and recommended intakes from various sources. This gap can be readily filled with an increased consumption of fish/seafood containing [Omega-3] DHA/EPA, the increased availability of foods that have been nutritionally enriched with various delivery forms of LC PUFA [Omega-3] (DHA/EPA), and the use of supplementation where necessary.”

Lori Covert, V.P. of Marketing & Communications for Ocean Nutrition Canada explained “This new study is really important because although research shows that awareness of the health benefits of Omega-3 EPA/DHA is high most people still do not consume enough fish. In fact, more than 80% of Americans do not consume at least two 4 oz servings of oily fish per week resulting in an Omega-3 EPA/DHA deficiency.” Covert continued “That is why we have partnered with major food manufacturers to fortify every day foods with our tasteless, odorless Omega-3 EPA/DHA fish oil ingredient.”

“For many years now infant formula has been supplemented with DHA so many parents are already aware of the health benefits associated with Omega-3 for their children. However, it’s critical for parents to understand that children, and everyone for that matter, need both Omega-3 EPA and DHA from fish oil in their diet.” Dr. Sears, Associate Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at the University of California, Irvine, School of Medicine continued, “We need parents to understand that fish oil is the only source of both EPA and DHA. DHA has benefits for infant’s brain and eye development. However, as infants grow they need both Omega-3 EPA and DHA for long-term cognitive development and to improve symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), and to reduce the risk of developing type 1 diabetes.”

### **About Omega-3**

Omega-3 is an essential nutrient consisting of EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid), DHA (docosahexaenoic acid) and ALA (alpha-linolenic acid (ALA)). The only natural source of Omega-3 EPA/DHA is oily fish. ALA is found in plants (such as flax and chia). However, it is important to note that only EPA and DHA contribute to the many health benefits associated with Omega -3. ALA can be converted into EPA and DHA, however, the body converts it very inefficiently (less than .31%) so it is not possible to derive any Omega-3 related health benefits from plant sources. Furthermore, although Omega-3 EPA/DHA is vital to overall good health, the human body cannot produce it on its own, so it is necessary to consume this nutrient by eating fish, or eating foods fortified with fish oil or by consuming fish oil supplements. For more information on the health benefits of Omega-3 EPA/DHA please visit [www.meg-3.com](http://www.meg-3.com)

### **About Ocean Nutrition Canada Limited (ONC):**

Ocean Nutrition Canada (ONC) is a privately held company, whose major shareholder is Clearwater Fine Foods Incorporated. Clearwater Fine Foods Incorporated is a diversified holding/investment company whose significant holdings include a controlling interest in Clearwater Seafood’s Limited Partnership, the world’s largest integrated shellfish harvester and processor.

ONC is a global leading supplier of Omega-3 EPA and DHA ingredients from fish oil...essential nutrients that have been scientifically linked to supporting heart health, brain health, and general wellness. ONC markets its MEG-3® ingredients into the Dietary Supplement and Healthy Food markets. To date MEG-3® ingredients have been included in over 40 billion servings of food and supplement products world wide. For more information on Ocean Nutrition Canada Limited visit [www.ocean-nutrition.com](http://www.ocean-nutrition.com), and for more information on the health benefits of Omega-3 EPA/DHA please visit [www.meg-3.com](http://www.meg-3.com).

### **About Dr. William Sears:**

Dr. Sears, or Dr. Bill as his “little patients” call him, is the father of eight children, three of whom are doctors (two pediatricians and one general practitioner). Dr. Sears is also the author of over 40 books on childcare, most notably *The Baby Book* considered by many to be the ultimate “how to” guide to raising your child. Dr. Bill received his pediatric training at Harvard Medical School’s Children’s Hospital in Boston and The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto – the largest children’s hospital in the world, where he served as Associate Ward Chief of the newborn nursery and Associate Professor of Pediatrics. Dr. Sears is a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics (FAAP) and a Fellow of the Royal College of Pediatricians (FRCP). Dr. Bill is also a medical and parenting consultant for BabyTalk and Parenting magazines. Visit Dr. Sears’ website, [www.AskDrSears.com](http://www.AskDrSears.com) to learn more.

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