

# HEALTHfirst

Your neighbourhood nutrition source

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## Essential Fatty Acids –

### *Choosing the right EFA supplement for you.*

Over the last several years, the popularity and consumer awareness of essential fatty acids has been on an exponential increase. Previously, consumers had been taught to shun all fats, making no distinction between “bad” fats or “good” fats. The research emerging on the benefits of “good” fats, however, proved to be too extensive for health professionals and the media to ignore. Now a growing percentage of consumers are taking the step of supplementing their diets with these vital nutrients.

Essential fatty acids (EFAs) are indeed essential. They are needed for maintaining cell wall and membrane structure, energy and hormone production and normal functioning of the brain, nerves and eyes. Further, studies show that EFAs help us deal with such serious health issues as heart disease, rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes and mental disorders.<sup>1</sup> The most important fatty acids are ALA (alpha linolenic acid), GLA (gamma linolenic acid), and Omega-3 fatty acids (including EPA and DHA).

With the increasing popularity of EFAs, the choices for consumers have also become more difficult. The “wall of supplements” at your local health food store often has an over-abundance of choices. How can you choose the right EFA for you?

#### **Multi-EFAs: A good place to start**

The best place to start when choosing an EFA supplement is to consider your own health needs. If you are a generally healthy individual, without any major health concerns and just wanting to

take an EFA supplement for daily insurance, then a multi-EFA may be the best choice for you.

Selecting a multi-EFA supplement is the most convenient way to get the essential fats needed for everyday health. A multi-EFA is to good fats what a multi-vitamin is to vitamin supplementation. And like a multi-vitamin, a multi-EFA should be taken everyday. Look for a multi-EFA that contains a full spectrum of omega 3, omega 6 and omega 9 fatty acids. The oils used to get a complete blend of EFAs are most commonly sourced from a combination of the plants borage and flax, and fish found in deep, cold waters.

With certain health issues, you might consider a more specific single EFA or even rotating use of that single EFA together with a multi-EFA. The single EFA supplements and their key uses include:

**Fish oil supplements:** Heart health, joint health and brain health.

**GLA supplements (borage oil or evening primrose oil):** PMS symptoms, skin health, diabetic neuropathy, and joint health.

**ALA and lignan supplements (flax seed oil):** Heart health, digestive health and some PMS symptoms. Flax seed oil should also be considered by those who do not tolerate or eat fish, as ALA is converted in the body to EPA and DHA omega-3's.

1. Gittleman, Anne Louise “Get your healthy fats the easy way.” March 2001. [www.fatsforhealth.com](http://www.fatsforhealth.com)

## Digestive health –

### *The role of stomach acid*

It is estimated that almost one-third of Canadians suffer from low stomach acidity.<sup>1</sup> This condition occurs when an individual's stomach is unable to produce a sufficient amount of stomach acid (hydrochloric acid) for the proper functioning of the digestive system. Baby boomers and seniors are the groups most commonly afflicted by low stomach acidity, as aging and the frequent use of medications can reduce the stomach's acid producing capability.<sup>1</sup>

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# Store Masthead

## HEALTH FIRST Advisory Panel

### Dr. Victor Wong, R. Ac., TCMD

Dr. Wong is an Acupuncturist registered in Alberta and a Traditional Chinese Medical Doctor. He has been in private practice in Canada for 15 years, helping thousands of people achieve better health. Dr. Wong is a well known doctor in his profession and has lectured throughout Canada and the United States. Dr. Wong is a committed and dynamic member of the Alberta Association of Traditional Chinese Medical Doctors and the Health First Network as owner of the Sincere Natural Health store located in Calgary.



### Alicja Wojewnik-Smith, MSc

Along with her Masters of Science in Microbiology, Alicja has more than 20 years of experience in the Canadian health product industry working with several major companies. Her expertise in the category, earned her an appointment to the national transition team of experts working with the Canadian government in developing new regulations for the industry. She founded the consulting firm Dicentra Inc. in 2001 to assist companies with science, formulations, regulatory compliance, quality standards and product claims for natural products.



### EFA-First Omega 3-6-9 Complex *Essential fats for everyday health!*

EFA-First is a balanced essential fatty acid supplement that makes it easy to get the good fats you need every day. Containing borage oil, flaxseed oil and fish oil, this "multivitamin" of oils supplies the full range of good fats: omega 3, 6 and 9.

# Why Health First™ Supplements?

*Why does our store proudly recommend the Health First™ brand supplements for your health needs?*

#### Because Health First™ supplements are...

- manufactured in fully GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices) compliant facilities.
- formulated in conjunction with the health professionals of the Health First Network.
- made with high quality raw materials sourced from around the world.
- third-party tested for quality and safety confirmation.
- proven. Health First™ supplements have been used with satisfaction by thousands and thousands of Canadian consumers for almost five years.



## EXPERT ADVICE

by Dr. Victor Wong, R. Ac., TCMD

### *From the Health First Network: A Recipe for...Daily Health*

The choices we make in maintaining our daily health can have consequences on our long-term health and enjoyment of life.

Stress affects everyone in their daily life. Healthy living begins with settling the mind. "Everyone can become enlightened if they let go of their deluded thoughts," the Buddha said. Let your mind relax through practicing Tai Chi, yoga or meditation. Often one could accomplish much more by backing up one step. Be aware of your emotions. Don't let bad emotions or desire control you. Regular exercise and sufficient rest help to reduce stress.

Eat only 70% of your fill at each meal. Have an apple or some carrot sticks if you feel hungry between meals. Drink eight glasses of water (8 oz.) daily. Pop and commercially blended juice is often heavily loaded with sugar. Dilute juices with at least an equal amount of water before drinking. Cow's milk is hard on the digestion, especially if one is lactose intolerant. A good Calcium-Magnesium supplement from citrate source minerals is much more effective for building healthy bone mass. Over-consumption of coffee can increase stress hormones, raise blood pressure, cause irregular

heart beats or interfere with sleep. One may consider green tea as an alternative.

High intake of bad fats can lead to circulatory problems. Minimize the consumption of french fries, potato chips, or processed foods that are associated with hydrogenated fat. Good fat cleanses bad fat. An oil supplement that is rich in essential fatty acids (good fats), such as EFA-First Capsules, can improve circulation and reduce bad cholesterol.

The easiest way to replenish the vitamins and minerals we need is to take a good formula of multi-vitamins and minerals everyday. Consider a well-balanced formula like Multi-First in tablet or capsule form. Regular administration of digestive enzymes helps break down food into nutrients for better absorption. In my practice, I recommend patients use PrimeZyme, which is a very effective, yet affordable, full spectrum digestive enzyme.

Another way to maintain daily health is to involve a health care practitioner in your health regimen. We use experts to maintain our cars, computers and homes, why not learn how to maintain our bodies and minds with help from an expert?

# Natural anti-inflammatories and blood-thinners – Proceed with Caution

The majority of Canadians over age 55 suffer from at least some degree of osteoarthritis. This painful condition occurs when the cartilage between the joints is worn down, causing them to rub against each other without sufficient cushioning. For many, osteoarthritis is not merely painful, it reduces mobility and freedom to enjoy life.

Unfortunately, the same demographic of Canadians dealing with osteoarthritic conditions, tends to be the same group ailing from circulatory conditions. A large percentage of this group is taking blood-thinning drugs to reduce their risk of a heart attack, as recommended by their physicians. Popular blood-thinners include aspirin, warfarin and atorvastatin.

While many natural supplements are effective in reducing the painful inflammation associated with osteoarthritis, users must be extra cautious in the products they consume if they are taking blood-thinners at the same time. Some of the natural products that should be used with caution are:

- **Devil's Claw** – Health Canada recommends those taking blood-thinners avoid taking large amounts of Devil's Claw, one of the most popular natural anti-inflammatories on the market.

- **Feverfew** – Feverfew is an effective anti-inflammatory, but has been known to cause internal bleeding in those taking blood-thinners.
- **White willow bark** – Those taking aspirin as a blood-thinner should avoid taking white willow bark, which is the precursor to aspirin and can further thin the blood.

Fortunately, your local health food store has a variety of effective natural ingredients for joint pain that do not interact with blood-thinners.

- Glucosamine Sulfate
- Glucosamine Hydrochloride (HCL)
- MSM (Methylsulfonylcellulose)
- Collagen Type II
- Boswellia
- Sarsaparilla
- Cat's Claw
- Yucca Root
- Omega-3 fatty acids
- Vitamin D

There is a safe way for those taking blood-thinners to get natural joint relief...just make sure you proceed with caution and always consult your health care practitioner.



## Digestive health - continued from page 1

Common signs of low stomach acidity are reflected in a variety of poor digestion symptoms. Bloating, belching and flatulence after meals, indigestion, heartburn, diarrhea or constipation, undigested food in the stool, and food allergies are all associated with insufficient stomach acid.

There are serious health concerns that can result from low stomach acidity. One is the poor absorption of minerals and vitamins, particularly calcium, iron, vitamin B12 and folic acid. Just recently, certain ulcer drugs that lower stomach acid production were linked to a 41% reduction in calcium absorption in women.<sup>2</sup> Poor absorption of minerals and vitamins can lead to malnutrition and a host of health problems. A second concern is that low stomach acidity has been found to adversely affect the immune system of seniors. Because food borne bacteria and parasites thrive in an environment of low stomach acidity, risk of a related infection is increased.<sup>3</sup>

Many health care professionals recommend betaine hydrochloride supplementation to maintain proper

stomach acid production. Betaine hydrochloride is a vitamin-like nutrient found naturally in grains and contains hydrochloric acid.

One way to alleviate digestive problems is to supplement with a full spectrum digestive enzyme containing added betaine hydrochloride. A full spectrum digestive enzyme typically contains a complex of enzymes to break down the major food substances – proteins, fats, carbohydrates, lactose and plant materials. The addition of betaine hydrochloride to such a supplement will help those with low stomach acidity by ensuring a more productive digestive environment. Betaine hydrochloride also helps to activate enzymes for improved digestion. For a more serious stomach acidity problem, your health care professional may recommend a high dose betaine hydrochloride supplement.

1. Cathy Wong, N.D., Alternative Medicine. <http://altmedicine.about.com/cs/digestiveproblems/a/LowHCL.htm>
2. American Journal of Medicine (2005; 118; 778-81)
3. US Food and Drug Administration, Seniors and Food Safety (May 1999)



**Joints-First Liquid**  
*Easy-to-take joint relief.  
Even with blood-thinners.*

Finally... a liquid version of the best-selling Joints-First formula for joint pain. This easy-to-swallow and easy-to-absorb liquid supplement has a pleasant fruity taste with a twist. All ingredients have been reviewed by health professionals for use with blood thinners. Featuring a double-Glucosamine complex, MSM, Collagen Type II together with a combination of effective anti-inflammatory herbs.



**PrimeZyme Full Spectrum  
Digestive Enzyme Capsules**  
*Our best digestive enzyme,  
now with added Betaine HCL!*

PrimeZyme is an effective digestive enzyme formula that helps to break down a full spectrum of food substances: protein, fat, fibre, lactose and carbohydrates. PrimeZyme helps to reduce indigestion and enhances nutrient absorption. Now with betaine hydrochloride to ensure sufficient stomach acid for a proper digestive environment.

# Put your Health First™ & WIN!



For the month of June 2006, with every purchase of Health First™ supplements at your local Health First Network store, you have a chance to win!

- 500 consumers across Canada will win a copy of "Healthy Fats For Life". Learn why essential fatty acids are vital to your health. Retail value of \$29.95.
- 3 lucky consumers will win the Grand Prize of "Health First for a Year": a year's supply of our daily essential fatty acid supplement, EFA-First Capsules. (Year's supply = 9 bottles of 120's size EFA-First Capsules). Retail value of \$180.00. No cash value.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of store where Health First™ products were purchased: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive future health information mailings or special promotional offers

Yes

No

We Respect your Privacy. Health First does not sell or lease your personal identifying information to non affiliated companies or entities.

## Coenzyme Q10 – by Alicja Wojewnik-Smith, MSc A safe "heart smart" supplement

Over the last few years, two of the most favoured products for heart health, statin drugs and vitamin E, have come under concern for safety issues.

Some of the statin drugs, commonly prescribed by doctors for reducing low-density lipid cholesterol and preventing the risk of heart attacks, have been linked with potentially harmful side effects. On the moderate end, these side effects can range from nausea to muscle cramps to constipation. On the more severe end, statins can in rare cases lead to possible liver damage or kidney failure.<sup>1</sup>

And while still controversial and hotly debated, some recent studies have unexpectedly brought some concern over the use of high levels of vitamin E supplementation.

With the concerns over statin drug and vitamin E usage, many consumers have been left looking for an alternative. The supplement Coenzyme Q10 is becoming an increasingly recommended factor for cardiovascular health.

Coenzyme Q10, also known as ubiquinone, is a nutrient found naturally throughout the body. It is required for the production of energy within our body's cells, acting as our cellular spark plug. Coenzyme Q10 is a powerful antioxidant and is used primarily for cardiovascular health. Its antioxidant properties prevent the oxidation of low-density lipid cholesterol, which can cause atherosclerosis and allows it to be a protective agent during bypass surgery. A low level of Coenzyme Q10 can lead to heart failure, making supplementation as we age

necessary, especially if we are using drugs that inhibit Q10 production. Coenzyme Q10 has also been shown to reduce high blood pressure and strengthen the contractions of the heart muscle and related blood flow. Its wide range of benefits for heart health has made Coenzyme Q10 one of the leading prescriptions in Japan.<sup>2</sup>

Coenzyme Q10 is considered a very safe supplement. Its many drug interactions are considered positive: it can reduce heart-related toxicity of chemotherapy drugs and assist the effectiveness of blood pressure drugs. When using Coenzyme Q10 with the blood thinner warfarin, an increased dosage of warfarin may be required to compensate for Coenzyme Q10 interactions.<sup>3</sup>

One of the other side effects of statin drugs is that they block the production of Coenzyme Q10 in addition to blocking cholesterol production. Because Coenzyme Q10 is required for energy production in many vital organs, supplementation during statin use should be considered. Statins commonly cause muscle cramps and pain, due to the reduced Coenzyme Q10 levels.<sup>1</sup> While Coenzyme Q10 supplementation can be beneficial, remember to always consult your health care professional before taking any supplement with medication.

1. Hannan, Rachel, Dr. John Moran. "Statins: Are there alternatives?" [www.50connect.co.uk](http://www.50connect.co.uk)
2. Murray, Michael. T., "Encyclopedia of Nutritional Supplements." pp. 296-300.
3. Mounts, Verne, "The Importance of Coenzyme Q10." Zanesville Times Recorder. Feb. 19, 2006.

Coenzyme Q10  
60 mg Capsules

The cellular  
sparkplug!



Coenzyme Q10 is a nutrient involved in producing energy for all the body's cellular functions. Q10 is crucial for heart health, antioxidant protection and is often used by athletes for maximum performance. Made with high-quality Japanese material.

HEALTH  
FIRST™

Your neighbourhood nutrition source

Look for our Health First Fall Newsletter and Flyer Sale