Omega-3 fatty acids are nutrients essential for human growth and development. Fatty acids are present in every cell of the body and have many potential health benefits. These include reducing triglycerides in the blood and reducing the risk of heart disease and stroke. In addition, omega-3 fatty acids help lower blood pressure and reduce symptoms of other conditions including depression, attention deficient disorder (ADD), joint pain, muscle pain and certain skin conditions.

Omega-3 fatty acids are also currently being studied to determine if they reduce side effects for cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy. Research suggests two ways that omega-3 fatty acids produce these benefits: by boosting the immune system and by decreasing inflammation.

High amounts of omega-3 fatty acids can be found in some foods such as salmon, flax seeds, and walnuts. Research shows that eating foods naturally high in omega-3s may be more effective than taking a supplement. In addition to eating high omega-3 fish such as salmon and tuna at least twice a week, these simple cooking and food tips, followed by some sample recipes, will give you good ideas on easy ways to add omega-3s to your daily routine and help increase the levels in your diet:

- Substitute up to ¼ of the oil in baked goods with milled flax seed (great in muffins and holiday breads).
- Use canola oil or a high omega-3 margarine with no trans-fat in place of corn oil, vegetable oil, or butter for holiday baking or for sauteing.
- Substitute canola oil for shortening or lard in pie crusts, decrease the water slightly and roll out between waxed paper.
• Substitute omega-3 fortified products (sour cream, eggs, etc.) in holiday recipes.

• Add English walnuts to your favorite recipes such as hot oatmeal with raisins and cinnamon for breakfast.

• Shrimp cocktail, smoked herring or sardines on peppered crackers make a great, high omega-3 party appetizer.

**Banana Walnut Bread**

*Makes 2 loaves*

3 high omega-3 eggs, beaten  
1 cup canola oil  
2 cups sugar  
2 cups ripe bananas, mashed  
2 cups unbleached flour  
1 cup whole wheat flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
3 teaspoons cinnamon  
1 teaspoon nutmeg  
¼ cup ground flaxseed  
¼ cup English walnuts, chopped

Beat eggs, oil, sugar and bananas until smooth. Add dry ingredients and beat just until mixed. Divide batter into two 9x5” loaf pans, sprayed with canola oil.

Bake on lowest rack in oven at 350 degrees for 55-60 minutes or until knife inserted in center comes out clean. (May need to lightly cover with foil for last 10 minutes to prevent over-browning).

244 calories per serving

**Tuna Cheese Ball Dip**

*Serves 16*

8 ounces light cream cheese (Neufchatel)  
¼ teaspoon hot pepper sauce  
1 tablespoon light mayonnaise or salad dressing  
½ teaspoon garlic powder  
6-ounce can Albacore tuna, drained  
1 ounce (14 halves) English walnuts, chopped

Combine all ingredients but tuna and nuts. Cream with mixer until smooth. Stir in tuna. Form into a ball or spoon into serving dish. Sprinkle with chopped walnuts if desired. Refrigerate and serve with crackers.

35 calories per serving

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