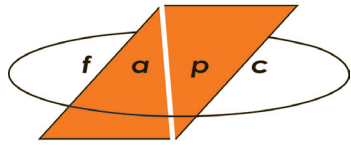


# Food & Agricultural Products Center



# FLASH!!

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY™

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## Omega-3 Fatty Acids May Reduce Heart Disease

STILLWATER, Okla. – Products containing two omega-3 fatty acids may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently announced that companies producing conventional foods that contain the omega-3 fatty acids eicosapentaenoic acid, EPA, and docosahexaenoic acid, DHA, can now place a qualified health claim for reduced risk of coronary heart disease on the food's packaging.

According to the FDA website, the health claim would read, *“Supportive but not conclusive research shows that consumption of EPA and DHA omega-3 fatty acids may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. One serving of [name of food] provides [x] grams of EPA and DHA omega-3 fatty acids. [See nutrition information for total fat, saturated fat and cholesterol content.]”*

The EPA and DHA omega-3 fatty acids are found in oily fish such as tuna and salmon, said Darren Scott, sensory specialist coordinator for the Food & Agricultural Products Center.

“Companies such as Martek Biosciences Corporation currently produce DHA that is derived from algae,

which then can be used as an ingredient source for other foods so that consumers need not only eat fish to get the health benefits of DHA,” Scott said. “Kraft is also interested in the health claim for several of its products.”

Another product that has been supplemented with EPA and DHA is baby formula.

However, this is based on research that suggests the omega-3 fatty acids help with the eye and brain growth of children

rather than reduced risk of coronary disease.

According to the FDA Web site, FDA Acting Commissioner Lester M. Crawford said, “Coronary heart disease is a significant health problem that causes 500,000 deaths annually in the United States. This new qualified health claim for omega-3 fatty acids should help consumers as they work to improve their health by identifying foods that contain these important compounds.”

A similar qualified health claim for reduced risk of coronary heart disease and consumption of dietary supplements containing EPA and DHA was approved in 2000.

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*Lester M. Crawford  
FDA Acting Commissioner  
FDA Web site*

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However, the FDA recommends that consumers not exceed more than a total of 3 grams per day of EPA and DHA omega-3 fatty acids, with no more than 2 grams per day from a dietary supplement, Scott said.

“It should also be noted that companies cannot make the claim if their foods exceed 13 grams of total fat or 60 milligrams of cholesterol per serving,” Scott said.

For additional information regarding qualified health claims, visit [www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/lab-qhc.html](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/lab-qhc.html).

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Darren Scott is a sensory specialist coordinator at the FAPC. He may be contacted at (405) 744-6071 or <a href="mailto:scottdd@okstate.edu">scottdd@okstate.edu</a> .
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Food & Agricultural Products Center  
Oklahoma State University  
Room 148  
Stillwater, OK 74078-6055