

The Value of High Dose Fish Oils

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What's your philosophy about dosing nutritional supplements? In my early days as a nutritionist I felt that if a little is good, more is better. I quickly learned, that philosophy is not always the best therapeutic approach. However more recently, I have become aware of the need to be bold and give a therapeutic bolus of nutrients and then back off once symptoms subside, particularly with fish oil and vitamin D.

Case in point is a man we will call Kevin, he is a 51 year old male who drives a truck by day and rides and ropes horses after work and on weekends. He has had a serious history of back pain, in fact has had two spinal surgeries that left him in constant pain.

For years his pain was so bad that each morning he had to stumble to the shower and let the moist heat relax his muscles to the point where he could function without pain.



He also had a condition called trigger finger, in that he couldn't close his hands all the way due to the inflammation in his hands. Kevin has a family history of heart disease and elevated cholesterol and triglycerides. He's not over weight and he's never followed any type of therapeutic diet.

He had tried various nutritional supplements faithfully and in fact was taking 2 - 4 fish oil capsules a day for years. His condition was stable, uncomfortable but stable, that is until about 3 months ago when his life changed forever.

His wife happens to be our office manager and was aware of a new product from Biotics Research called Biomega 3 Liquid. The maintenance dose is a teaspoon which yields 1,400 mg of omega-3 fatty acids from small fish like anchovies and sardines. It tasted so good he took 2 tablespoons which is a whopping 8,400 mg of omega-3 fatty acids. I mean, one tablespoon is 4,200 mg.

Most of the current research supports 3 - 5 grams a day to reduce pain and inflammation. But he took 2 tablespoons, one

tablespoon with breakfast and one tablespoon before bed. Three weeks after he started the large dose, his hands became more nimble and had so much flexibility that he could easily open and close them. Then his back loosened up and he had longer and longer "pain free" periods, until he was completely "pain free."

He enjoyed this hiatus from pain for about a month and decided, as we often do, to stop the things which brought him relief. About a month later the pain and restriction in his hands came back. Kevin realized he had stopped taking the oil and began the therapeutic dose. Much to his surprise in a few days, his back pain and the inflammation in his hands was gone.

Yes, this is a case of one. However, for years Dr. Alex Vasquez talked about giving people 2 tablespoons of Optimal EFAs which yields 3,600 mg of omega-3s and 1,500 mg of GLA for serious cases. Dr. Mark Houston in his interviews with me shared how he often gives 3,000 mg of EPA and DHA. I have included a few citations that show the higher the dose of fish oil, the lower the inflammation markers.

Increased doses of omega-3 fatty acids result in less pain. Higher doses of fish oil result in less death from cardiovascular disease and up to 62% lower risk of fatal heart attack.

A 2010 study in JAMA showed cardiac patients in the highest quartile of fish oil consumption had the best telomere protection. Telomeres are necessary for gene transcription. As telomeres become shortened there is an increase in disease and mortality. See the link below for studies.

The evidence for high dose omega-3 from fish is strong; and in Kevin's case, a high dose made all the difference. Kevin's case really made me think. How often did I recommend the correct program but didn't give the correct dosage? Sure sometimes lower doses will have a positive effect; but if we don't see the desired therapeutic effect, it's ok to go higher with some nutrients.

Here are a couple of therapeutic considerations when using higher doses. If your patients taste fish hours later, make sure the oil they are taking is not rancid. Fish oil purity is a big issue. If it's Biotics, we don't have to worry about inconsistent batches.

Once purity is confirmed, assess digestion, particularly gall bladder function. I use Beta-TCP, 3 tablets with each meal if they have a gall bladder and Beta Plus if they don't. Consider using the liquid forms of the oils. I believe the tasting of the oils has a therapeutic benefit. Dr. Goodheart and others have said for years that the tasting of nutrients has a hypothalamic connection and will increase absorption and utilization dramatically.

Finally, Dr. Vasquez and others have presented research showing that giving high doses of omega-3s long term will displace GLA and omega-9 oils. So use the Biomega-3 for a few months to ramp up the omega-3 levels, then switch to a blend of 3, 6, and 9 like Optimal EFAs or EFA-Sirt Supreme.

Kevin's story reminds us of the value of high dose fish oils. For some people, it can be life changing.

Thanks for reading this week's edition. See you next Tuesday.