

## The health benefits of eating fish

By Mark Rackay

As difficult as it is to believe, I don't really like fish. Considering that I have fished around the world, and even chartered boats and owned a tackle company, I would rather eat charcoal briquets than a slab of fish.

Growing up we always had a Friday night fish fry, consisting of fried trout or walleye, fried potatoes and fried coleslaw. You see, back then everyone thought fried foods were good for you. The only thing that got me to eat my miniscule portion of fish was a half-bottle of ketchup and the promise of chocolate cake for dessert.

Most of the fish I catch, I return to the waters. My own research indicates that most serious fishermen practice catch and release because they don't eat fish. You see, fish is brain food. People who eat a lot of fish have very large and well-developed brains. People with large and well-developed brains don't fish. That's my story anyway.

Generally speaking, fish is really good for your diet. They are high in many of the nutrients that most people do not get enough of. This includes high-quality protein, iodine and an assortment of vitamins and minerals.

The healthiest fish to eat are the fatty ones, like trout, salmon, tuna, mackerel, and sardines (yuck). These species are higher in fat-based nutrients which many of us are lacking. This includes fat-soluble vitamin D, which functions like a steroid hormone in the human body.

Fatty fish are also higher in omega-3 fatty acids. These fatty acids are crucial for your body and brain to function

also believe that the fatty types of fish are even more beneficial for a healthy heart because of their high amounts of omega-3 fatty acids.

A study published in the PMC U.S. National Library of Medicine in 2014, concluded that omega-3 fatty acids are beneficial against depression, and serves to significantly increase the effectiveness of antidepressant medications. They further discovered that fish may also help with other mental disorders, such

Autoimmune disease occurs when the human immune system attacks and destroys healthy body tissues. A prime example of this is type 1 diabetes, which involves the immune system attacking the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas.

Several studies have shown that omega-3 can be linked to a reduced risk of type 1 diabetes in children, as well as a form of autoimmune diabetes in adults. Some preliminary research has

benefits fatty fish has to offer. If you can, choose wild caught fish over the farm-raised types. Wild fish has a tendency to be higher in omega-3 and less likely to be contaminated with harmful pollutants.

I generally give away to neighbors any fish I keep while fishing. It usually does not take the neighbors long to realize that a fish lugged around in the back of a fishing vest all day, is a lousy excuse



Here is a picture of me and a tarpon I caught in the Florida Keys. Tarpon are strictly a game fish, and released immediately to fight again another day. (Special to MDP and DCI/ Mark Rackay)

for your body and brain to function optimally. A diet of fatty fish, a couple times a week is recommended for a healthy lifestyle. Fish is considered to be among the best foods you can eat for a healthy heart, but probably not fried.

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In one study of 40,000 male health professionals in the United States, those who ate fish at least once or twice a week had a 15 percent lower risk of heart disease. Many large observational studies have shown people who regularly consume fish as part of their diet have a lower risk of heart attacks, strokes and heart disease. Researchers

as bi-polar disease.

What this means is that fish included regularly in the diet can quite literally make you a happier person and improve your quality of life. And to think, I got depressed whenever Friday fish fry was here.

According to the National Library of Medicine, 41.6% of the U. S. population is deficient in vitamin D. Vitamin D functions like a steroid hormone in the human body. Fish and fish products are the best dietary source there is for vitamin D, especially fatty fish like salmon and trout.

A single 4 ounce serving of cooked salmon delivers 100% of the recommended daily allowance of vitamin D. Many of us don't spend enough time in the sun, especially during the winter months, and the sun is a good source of vitamin D.

indicated that the same fish oils may lower the risk of rheumatoid arthritis and multiple sclerosis, but the results are not definitive as yet.

Many older adults suffer from a vision impairment called macular degeneration, which can lead to blindness. There is some recent evidence that fish and omega-3 fatty acids may help provide some protection from this disease.

One study found that regular consumption of fish was linked to a 42% lower risk of macular degeneration in women. Another study found that a diet of fatty fish once per week was linked to a 53% decreased risk of neovascular macular degeneration.

Fish is relatively simple to prepare and is not too difficult to include in a regular diet. Eating fish twice a week is probably enough to reap all the nutritional

for a T-bone steak. The bottom line I guess, is to go outdoors and catch your own fish.

My wife makes a lot of fish for us as part of our healthy diet. It's a good thing we have plenty of ketchup. Now if I could only get her on board for the chocolate cake for dessert thing, I would have it made.

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