

Staying healthy with *good* fatty foods.

Healthy Hemp Seeds

Fats do not necessarily make us fat, nor should we avoid them. If in fact they are the 'good' fats then this is something we should be looking out for, not avoiding.

Some fats are not only good for us, but essential for our body to work – and if they do not then a plethora of symptoms occur. These essential fatty acids (EFAs) are called linoleic acid (LA) or omega-6 and alpha-linolenic acid (LNA) known as omega 3. A good source of these EFAs is hemp seed.

Hemp seed is a staple in most diets globally, being added to snack bars, pastas, breads and even as the base to non-dairy milks. Hemp seed tastes good by itself and is fed to children and breastfeeding mums. Due to old legislation, Australia and New Zealand seem to be the last to discover the benefits of this ancient grain.

Eat fat and get slim

Those of us wanting to loose some weight will find that hydrogenated fats are worth avoiding whilst omega-3 and omega-6 must be consumed. These healthy fats are not only beneficial; they work to prevent most of the diseases the unhealthy fats create! These fats actually help you lose weight. This is because they act in the opposite way to saturated fats, ie. they may increase oxidation and metabolic rate.

Detox through food

Many detox diets focus on 'lack' or fasting or foods that don't taste good. When one understands the benefits of good fatty foods, such as hemp seeds a detox diet may actually include decadent tasting and enjoyable foods.

Due to the fact that essential fatty acids carry a slight negative charge they may repel one another. This means they keep membranes fluid. Their tendency to disperse also helps carry substances such as toxins to the surface of the skin, intestinal tract, kidneys or lungs where these substances can be discarded.

Growing up in Australia, legally

Hemp has been grown around the world for centuries, and only recently is being grown openly in Australia*. The hemp seed that is grown contains none of the drug ingredient THC that it's sister cousin marijuana is known for. Hidden beneath the mystery are serious health benefits including support for babies and pregnant mums.

Pregnancy and brain development

During pregnancy, a mother's diet influences the health of her baby. During pregnancy a massive demand is placed on a woman's need to consume enough fatty acids along with the appropriate vitamins and minerals.

In the early stages of pregnancy fatty acids are needed mainly for the growth of the placenta. Throughout the pregnancy and because fatty acids are the building blocks of phospholipid membranes around and within all cells the baby requires a significant fatty acid supply.

The brain is the most fatty acid-rich tissue in the body. During the last trimester, the baby's brain quadruples in weight, accumulating the fatty acids DHA and AA which may be made from omega-3 and omega-6. AA is needed for the proper development of short-term memory and communication along the nerve supply. DHA is needed for the development of eye membranes and normal nerve.

Of course nature supplies DHA and AA through breast milk. The supply of these nutrients through breast milk depends on the supply through dietary sources.

Without a good dietary supply it has been said that the mother's brain may be called upon to supply the necessary nutrients and this may be part of the reason for post-natal depression. When nutrients are leached from the brain they cannot be replaced.

Ensure adequate dietary supply of your fatty acids before conception and flowing through the entire pregnancy and whilst breast-feeding. This is for the health of you and your baby.

Muscle recovery after exercise

Essential Fatty Acids have many jobs throughout the body, which is why hemp seeds and hemp food products are sold in mainstream supermarkets throughout Europe and North America. EFAs help hold proteins in the membrane.

These EFAs omega-3 and omega-6 substantially shorten the time required for fatigued muscles to recover after exercise. They facilitate the conversion of lactic acid to water and carbon dioxide. This is good news for athletes that consume the hemp protein powder now widely available. Omega 3 also increases stamina and speeds healing on many levels.

Good for the heart, good for man

EFAs are precursors to prostaglandins. Some prostaglandins affect the tone of smooth muscles in our blood vessels, some lower blood pressure, some relax coronary arteries and some inhibit platelet stickiness. EFAs are also precursors to longer chain fatty acids needed by the most active oxygen-requiring tissues like those found in the brain, retina, adrenal gland and testicles.

Smooth as velvet

Omega-3 specifically produces smooth skin, which is why hemp seed oil is used consistently in high quality skin care products. The hemp seed and hemp oil may be used both internally and externally for the same benefits. Eating hemp seeds regularly may cause velvety skin and has caused healing in many skin problems including eczema and psoriasis.

Protein

As part of the 21 amino acids that hemp contains are the eight essential amino acids, and in greater quantities than tofu, egg whites or cows milk. Hemp also favours the production of the albumin and globulin serums, which are necessary to sustain human life. The protein is highly digestible because of the globular proteins, albumin and edestin whose structure closely resembles that of the protein produced by human blood. The absence of trypsin inhibitors, oligosaccharides and other anti-nutrients ensures that hemp protein is absorbed without complication. Hulled hemp seeds contain 33% protein, with hemp protein powder of around 50% now available.

Sustainable

Hemp is grown sustainable in Australia, supporting local farmers, local jobs and industry. The crops are grown for both seed and fibre, where the fibre is used for building, bio-plastics, textiles and fuel. Hemp requires no pesticides or herbicides and uses far less water than most intensive crops. Producing around 20t/ha of biomass in four months, hemp is a true alternative to our last remaining forests and oil reserves.

Legal hemp foods

Consuming hemp seeds, hemp seed oil and hemp protein as part of a regular healthy diet can be recommended by this author. However in Australia such products are still being considered for use in human foods, so you may buy these products for 'external use only'. Today you may buy food quality hulled hemp seeds, hemp protein and hemp oil. You may use them in skincare products or when you go on holiday, if you take them overseas, you can consume them then!

*Hemp is grown throughout Australia with Government licenses. Australia's public Hemp Farm is now open to the public www.hempfarm.com.au

About the Author

Paul Benhaim founded the European Hemp Food Industries Association in 1996. Growing hemp in Australia since 1999 he has authored 9 books on industrial hemp and is Director of Hemp Foods Australia www.hempfoods.com.au

Hi-Res photos available:

- * Hemp Seeds
 - * Hemp Field
 - * Author in his hemp clothing, sitting on a hemp chair on a hemp rug next to a hemp lampshade with his hemp books on a hemp board shelf under a hemp curtain in the hemp walls of the hemp museum at the hemp farm
- Others on request

Extra information

At levels of 12 to 15 percent of total calories, EFAs increase the rate of metabolic reactions in our body, and the increased rate burns more fat into carbon dioxide, water and energy, resulting in fat burn off and loss of excessive weight.

An optimum amount of essential fatty acids in a day, consumed through hulled hemp seeds maybe 2-3 tablespoons.

Nutrients required for proper functioning of omega-3 and omega-6 in the body include: vitamins A (or carotene), C, B3, B6 and the minerals magnesium and zinc.

Essential fats may also be consumed through flax oil (highest in omega-3), safflower oil (highest in omega-6), chia, fish oils and evening primrose oil.

However the ideal long-term ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 is found naturally in hemp seed.

All products high in essential fatty acids should be stored away from light, heat and oxygen. Light increases the ability to react with oxygen about a thousand fold. The ideal packaging for hemp seed is vacuum-sealed foil packaging stored in a refrigerator. The ideal packaging for hemp oil is in a dark bottle that has been nitrogen flushed and stored in the refrigerator.

Deficiency symptoms of Omega-6:

- Eczema like skin eruptions
- Loss of hair
- Liver degeneration
- Behavioural disturbances
- Kidney degeneration
- Excessive water loss through the skin accompanied by thirst
- Drying up of glands
- Susceptibility of infections
- Failure of wound healing
- Sterility in males
- Miscarriage in females
- Arthritis-like conditions
- Heart and circulatory problems
- Growth retardation

Deficiency symptoms of Omega-3:

- Growth retardation
- Weakness
- Impairment of vision and learning ability
- Motor incoordination
- Tingling sensations in arms and legs
- Behavioural changes

Other symptoms that respond very well to Omega-3 supplementation:

- High blood pressure
- Dry skin

- Mental deterioration
- High triglycerides
- Sticky platelets
- Tissue inflammation
- Edema
- Some kinds of immune dysfunction