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The Natural Prescriber

YOUR PRACTITIONER:

How Fish is Cooked Affects the Health Benefits of Omega 3 Fatty Acids

Deep sea oily fish are one of the best sources of omega three fatty acids, but the way you prepare fish has a big impact on the available levels of omega 3 and overall health benefits.

A recent large American clinical study, run over 11 years, involving 186,127 participants, investigated the long term benefits of omega 3 in the diet. Researchers examined the source, type, amount and frequency of dietary omega-3 ingestion among different gender and ethnic groups. They also surveyed the preparation methods of fish including: raw, baked, boiled, fried, salted or dried. The study did not consider grilled fish.

Their findings, presented at an American Heart Association conference in 2009, have shown that it is more beneficial to eat baked or boiled fish than fried, salted or dried fish. It was also found that boiling or baking fish with low-sodium soy sauce or eating with tofu, both plant sources of omega 3, helped to increase the health benefits, while dried, salted or fried fish was not considered beneficial to health and may actually contribute to health risk.

Omega-3 dietary intake was associated with a significantly lower risk of death due to heart disease in men. Overall, men who ate about 3.3 grams per day of omega-3 fatty acids had a 23 percent lower risk of cardiac death compared to those who ate 0.8 grams daily. "Clearly, we are seeing that the higher the dietary omega-3 intake, the lower the risk of dying from heart disease among men," researchers stated. Adding very small amounts of low sodium soy sauce, not more than 1.1 grams per day, was found to be protective for men.

For women, the omega-3 intake was also found to be cardio-protective. These benefits were increased when women added small amounts of low-sodium soy sauce to their fish meals. It was stressed that low-sodium soy sauce was considered the most beneficial as regular soy sauce is high in sodium and can increase health risks. Adding tofu was found to increase health benefits for both men and women. Eating salted or dried fish was seen to increase the health risks, especially for women. So to get the most benefits from the fish you eat, enjoy it raw, steamed, boiled or lightly grilled. Here is a lovely recipe that will boost the omega 3 fatty acid content of your meal with the addition of tofu and low sodium soy sauce.

Research has confirmed eating a diet rich in omega 3 fatty acids has many health benefits and is used in the treatment and prevention of several health conditions including:

Wellness and Preventative Health Care	Cardiovascular Health	Hyper-cholesterolemia	Hypertension
Pregnancy and Lactation	Foetal Development Health	Stress Adaptation	Depression and Mood Disorders
Inflammatory Conditions	Immune Regulation	Skin Conditions	Nervous System Development
Hormonal Health	Asthma	ADHD	Diabetes

Asian Steamed Fish with Tofu

Ingredients

- 1 small red chilli, finely diced
- 2 cloves garlic, finely diced
- 1 (1 inch equiv 2.5cm) piece fresh ginger, minced
- 1 tablespoon black bean sauce
- 2 tablespoons low sodium dark soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons low sodium white soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 pinch white pepper
- 1 tablespoon cornflour
- 1 tablespoon cold water
- White fish fillets to serve four - cut into 1 inch wide strips
- 1 packet of firm tofu, drained and cubed
- 1 cup of finely sliced spring onions

Directions

1. Bring about 2 inches (5 cm) of water to the boil in a pot fitted with a steamer basket.
2. In a large bowl, stir together the chilli, garlic, ginger, and black bean sauce. Stir in dark and white soy sauces, olive oil, sugar, and white pepper. In a small cup, mix together the cornflour and water. Stir into the sauce. Cut fish fillets into strips, add to the bowl, and coat well.
3. When water in steamer has reached the boil, carefully place the tofu cubes in a single layer in the basket, and steam, covered, for 2 minutes. Place the fish strips on top of the tofu; cover and steam for another 3 minutes.
4. Remove and garnish with chopped green onion. Serve with steamed rice and stir-fried or steamed Asian vegetables.

