According to the 2007 National Health Interview Survey, omega-3 fatty acid supplements were the non-vitamin/non-mineral nutritional supplements most commonly taken by adults.

What are omega-3’s and do I need them?

Omega-3 essential fatty acids are a type of unsaturated fatty acid necessary for normal human growth and development. However, the human body cannot produce them on its own. Therefore, we must obtain these essential fatty acids through content in the food we eat.

Fish oil contains two omega-3 fatty acids called docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA). Green leafy vegetables, flaxseed and rapeseed (canola) oils contain alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), which has limited ability to be converted to DHA and EPA in the body.

Extensive research shows marine-derived omega-3 fatty acids decrease triglycerides and risk of cardiovascular disease in certain populations. Unlike the beneficial effects in cardiovascular disease, their role in cancer prevention and treatment remains uncertain. Omega-3 fatty acids have many effects, one of which involves regulating inflammatory pathways. MD Anderson faculty and researchers are continuously investigating the role of omega-3’s and their anti-inflammatory and cell-growth inhibiting activities, which are critical pieces in cancer prevention and management.

There are risks to taking fish oil. It can potentially put the patient at greater risk of bleeding, especially during surgical procedures. In addition, a study conducted by researchers at cancer centers across the US has found a link between omega-3 fatty acids and an increased risk of prostate cancer. The study did not collect information on the participant’s diets. Therefore, it is not clear whether the omega-3 fatty acids in their blood came from food or from supplements. Fatty acids may have more complex effects on the body than previously thought and this finding requires further investigation.

To fully evaluate the role of omega-3 fatty acids in cancer management, more research needs to be conducted. For instance, the VITAL study, funded by the National Institutes of Health, is an ongoing study in 25,875 men and women across the US investigating whether taking daily dietary supplements of Vitamin D or omega-3 fatty acids reduces the risk for developing cancer, heart disease and stroke in people who do not have a prior history of these illnesses.

To make an appointment at the Integrative Medicine Center, ask your MD Anderson physician to submit an online consultation request. Our physicians will provide guidance on a comprehensive and integrative approach to your cancer care.

Sources to obtain omega-3’s directly from your food:
- Fish and fish oils
- Vegetable oils (flaxseed, canola, soybean and olive oils)
- Green leafy vegetables
- Grass-fed livestock and poultry (dairy products and eggs from grass-fed animals)

Patients should aim to incorporate omega-3 fatty acids in their diet, and we recommend talking with your physician before taking a supplement. It is important to tell your oncologist about any supplements you use to provide them with a complete picture of what you do to manage your health. This will help ensure coordinated and safe care.

1 Harris W. Omega-3 fatty acids and cardiovascular disease. Prost Graduation Medicine, 2013
2 http://jnci.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2013/07/09/jnci.djt174.abstract
Cooking for Optimal Health – The dietitian for the Integrative Medicine Center demonstrates how to prepare dishes meeting the whole foods, plant-based diet recommendations. Recipes will emphasize a different theme each month. Please join us for a fun class and tasty samples.

Nutrition Lecture – Learn about the special nutritional needs for cancer patients, information on organic foods, and more.

Get Moving – Get moving with Nia! Recharge and energize with uplifting music and a blend of yoga, dance and martial arts. Positively shape the way you feel and think. Any fitness level is welcome.

Pilates – Come learn and practice a series of exercises in deep muscle strengthening that improve skeletal alignment and overall flexibility.

Tai Chi – Find balance and strength through continuous flowing movements that link mind to body.

Brief Relaxation Massages – Experience a brief upper body massage for relaxation. Chair massages are generously funded by Angie’s Spa.

At the Table Cooking Class – Learn to prepare recipes from MD Anderson’s “At the Table” online cookbook, emphasizing quality recipes that can be enjoyed by the entire family. Participants will observe as a dietitian makes the dishes in our demo kitchen, then have the chance to enjoy some delicious samples.

Exploring Music for Relaxation – Learn to use your favorite recorded music to help you relax or become energized.

Tibetan Bon Meditation – Learn to relax and access a deeper awareness through connecting your mind, body, and heart through practices of breath and sound.

Yoga (Hatha) – Stretch your mind as well as your body by learning the postures, breathing exercises, and meditation.

Qigong – Experience this ancient Chinese system of self care using meditation, breath, and movement to balance the body’s energy flow.

Therapeutic Group Drumming – Through immersion in active music making, participants will explore creative self-expression to facilitate meaningful insights.

Yoga for Health – Learn ancient Indian Patanjali-based yoga practices of gentle stretching, breathing and meditation to experience relaxation through the balance of Mind-Body-Breath and restore complete health!

The Celebration Singers – Are you a cancer survivor or caregiver who enjoys singing? If you are, this special choir is for you!

Expressive Arts – Classes include: Paint Your Own Pottery, Beading Class, Shibori, Chinese Ink Art, and much more! Underwritten by COLLAGE: The Art for Cancer Network

Laughter for Health – A blend of deep breathing, stretching, and simulated laughter exercises that may help reduce stress, depression and more. Please bring a water bottle to class.

Look Good, Feel Better – Licensed cosmetologists help patients adjust to temporary or permanent changes in their appearance. MUST pre-register at (713) 792-6039.

Support Groups – Professionally-led support groups provide education, and sharing for patients, family and friends. For a complete list of support groups, please call the Social Work department at (713) 792-6195.

P.I.K.N.I.C. – An educational forum for patients, caregivers, family members, volunteers, faculty and staff who want to learn more about issues relevant to cancer. PIKNIC topics may change, please call 800-345-6324 for the latest schedule.

Visit www.mdanderson.org/integrativemedcenter to check out our audio and video resources including:

- Chemobrain: Is It Real?
- Gentle Chair and Bedside Yoga
- Safe Massage Techniques for the Cancer Patient
- Tibetan Bon Meditation
- plus much more!
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**How to schedule an appointment:**
- Call Integrative Medicine Center at 713-794-4700 or send a message from myMDA to schedule an appointment.
- Arrive 15 minutes early to check in for group classes.
- Following classes do not require pre-registration: Expressive Art and Support Groups.
- All Integrative Medicine Center classes will stop accepting participants 10 minutes after the start of the class. This will allow the facilitators the maximum amount of time to work with the participants. This does not apply to PIKNIC, Look Good, Feel Better and the support groups.
- Group programs are open to patients, survivors, caregivers and families regardless of where treatment is received.

www.mdanderson.org/integrativemedcenter | 713-794-4700
Individual Clinical Services

Please ask your MD Anderson physician to submit an online consultation request if you would like to schedule these services. For additional details, please call 713-794-4700, Main Building, R1.2000.

Integrative Oncology Physician Consultation
Our physicians will provide guidance on a comprehensive and integrative approach to your cancer care. Most insurance plans will cover the cost of your consultation. A consult with our physician is required in order to obtain a referral to:

- **Nutrition Consultation**
  A registered dietitian provides personalized nutrition counseling and education to help patients manage side effects and reach their goals during and after cancer treatment. Education emphasizes a whole foods, plant-based diet for optimal health.

- **Exercise / Physical Activity Consultation**
  Being more physically active may benefit patients in active treatment for cancer. Exercise may provide increased energy and more strength for performing activities of daily living.

Acupuncture
Acupuncture is a safe and often effective medical treatment that can be used to manage side effects from cancer and related treatments, including: nausea & vomiting, pain, neuropathy, hot flashes, fatigue, dry mouth. Services are by appointment and limited to MD Anderson patients. Initial visit fee will range from $85 to $100. Follow-up visits are between 30 and 60 minutes and range from $45 to $100.

Oncology Massage
Massage therapy may help patients relax and improve sleep quality. It may also relieve fatigue, pain, anxiety, and nausea. Services are by appointment for patients and their caregivers. Appointments are between 30 and 60 minutes and range from $35 to $65.

Music Therapy
Benefits of Music Therapy include: relaxation, creating calming environments, encouraging self-expression, reducing stress, improving coping skills, and implementing protocols to improve cognitive, motor, communication and socialization skills. Initial visit fee is $50. Follow-up visits are between 30 and 60 minutes and range from $25 to $50.

Meditation Consultation
Learn to relax and access a deeper awareness by connecting your mind, body and heart through simple techniques. Meditation decreases anxiety and negative emotions, improves sleep and memory and increases spiritual awareness and a sense of well-being. Initial visit fee is $50. Follow-up visits are between 30 and 60 minutes and range from $25 to $50.

Psychology Service
Health Psychology may be beneficial to patients experiencing psychosocial distress or who wish to work on lifestyle changes. A licensed clinical psychologist will provide both evaluation and interventions to address symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression and help you with your lifestyle changes.

Cancer Survivorship Week 2014
May 31–June 6

MD Anderson celebrates survivors and caregivers every year with a week of entertainment and educational activities. The events commemorate National Cancer Survivor’s Day, which is held annually on the first Sunday in June.

Patients, caregivers and their loved ones are invited to participate in education seminars and other free events at MD Anderson.

Visit [www.mdanderson.org/survivorship](http://www.mdanderson.org/survivorship) to learn more about this year’s activities.

Email survivorship@mdanderson.org to receive the 2014 events brochure.