

From our friends at Back To Herbs – 09/03/10



Krill Oil

Krill oil is the oil from a tiny, shrimp-like animal. There are 18 species of krill and an estimated 500 - 750 million tons of krill worldwide - making them the most significant biomass of animals in the world. Krill are commonly one to five centimeters in size and swim in vast swarms. They are food to fish, whales, sharks, seals, penguins, and other sea birds. Krill eat phytoplankton (microscopic plant life). Unlike many fish, krill are low enough on the food chain that they don't pose a threat of containing mercury.



In Norwegian, the word "krill" means, "whale food." Some brand name krill oil products indicate that they use Antarctic krill. This usually refers to the species of krill called *Euphausia superba*.

Krill oil contains fatty acids similar to fish oil. These fats are thought to be beneficial fats that decrease swelling, lower cholesterol, and make blood platelets less sticky. When blood platelets are less sticky they are less likely to form clots.

Krill oil, like fish oil, contains both of the omega-3 fats eicosapentanoic acid (EPA) and docosahexanoic acid (DHA), but hook together in a different form. In fish oil these omega-3 fatty acids are found in the triglyceride form whereas in krill oil they are hooked up in a double chain phospholipid structure. (The fats in our own cell walls are in the phospholipid form.) Attached to the EPA leg of the phospholipid is a molecule of astaxanthin, an extremely potent anti-oxidant. The phospholipid structure of the EPA and DHA in krill oil makes them much more absorbable and allows for a much easier entrance into the mitochondria and the cellular nucleus.

In addition to EPA and DHA krill oil contains a complex phospholipid profile including phosphatidylcholine, a potent source of reductive-stress-reducing choline, which also acts as a natural emulsifier. Krill oil contains vitamin E, vitamin A, vitamin D and canthaxanthin, which is, like astaxanthin, a potent anti-oxidant.

The anti-oxidant potency of krill oil is such that when compared to fish oil in terms of ORAC (Oxygen radical absorbance capacity) values it was found to be 48 times more potent than fish oil. It has an ORAC

value of 378, compared to fish oil's level of 8, and has 300 times the antioxidant power of vitamin A and vitamin E, and 34 times that of coenzyme Q-10.

Krill oil may be one of the most powerful supplements on the market today. High levels of DHA are required for optimum brain and retinal health. DHA is the primary building block of the brain, retina, and central nervous system. Although DHA can be found in the brain and retinas, our bodies cannot produce it. We must acquire DHA from our diets.

Krill oil is used for heart disease, high levels of certain blood fats (triglycerides), high blood pressure, high cholesterol, stroke, cancer, osteoarthritis, depression, premenstrual syndrome (PMS), and painful menstrual periods.

Deficiencies of DHA may increase the risk of depression, memory loss, diabetes, ADHD, cystic fibrosis, Alzheimer's disease, autism, nervous system disorders, Parkinson's disease, psychiatric disorders, alcoholism, sleeplessness, and behavioral problems. EPA provides anti-inflammatory benefits.

Pregnant women with deficiencies of DHA and EPA are at increased risk of developing postpartum depression and delivering a baby with lower IQ.

The benefits of krill oil have been studied for at least 20 years. Clinical studies have found krill oil especially effective when treating heart disease and heart-related health issues. The DHA and EPA found naturally in krill oil dramatically reduce factors of heart disease by lowering high cholesterol, reducing high blood pressure, and inhibiting plaque and blood clots in arteries. Krill oil reduces LDL (the bad) cholesterol, raises HDL (the good) cholesterol, and helps control blood sugar, which can aid in the prevention and treatment of diabetes.

The anti-inflammatory properties of EPA provide pain relief from rheumatoid arthritis and other joint pains, by reducing stiffness and tenderness in the joints, and increases grip strength. Krill oil can assist in the prevention and treatment of osteoarthritis. EPA increases calcium in the body, which deposits onto bones and improves bone strength.

Research has shown that krill oil can effectively treat a wide variety of common ailments and health concerns. Krill oil may promote weight loss by controlling blood sugar and lowering high cholesterol. The essential fatty acids DHA and EPA not only lower the risk, but also aid in the treatment of depression and bipolar disorder. Children with ADHD often have low stores of omega-3 fatty acids. Low levels of these essential acids are shown to cause learning and behavioral problems. By increasing amounts of omega-3, researchers found that improvements were made in academic abilities and behavior.

Krill oil helps decrease light sensitivity in those who suffer from intolerance to light. DHA and EPA may lower the risk of developing macular degeneration.

Omega-3 may help asthma sufferers; supplements have been shown to decrease inflammation and increase respiratory function.

Omega-3 fatty acids have also been shown to alleviate problems associated with premenstrual syndrome (PMS). Krill oil can decrease hot flashes, night sweating, and PMS-related pain.

Krill oil may help decrease the risk of certain types of cancer. In clinical studies, DHA and EPA appear to slow or reverse the early stages of colon cancer. The benefits were not applicable to late stages though. Consuming large quantities of omega-3 acids has shown a significant decrease in risk from dying of breast cancer. Researchers are currently studying the effects of omega-3 combined with vitamins and other nutrients to prevent and treat breast cancer. As with breast cancer, researchers speculate that omega-3 reduces the chance of developing prostate cancer.

Krill oil provides many benefits over fish oil. Krill oil and fish oil both contain DHA and EPA. However, krill oil does not contain heavy metals that are harmful to the body. Krill oil contains powerful antioxidants, astaxanthin and vitamins, that are not present in fish oil. Unlike fish oil, krill oil does not cause fishy burps or bloating.

The only downfall is that people who are allergic to shellfish may have an allergic reaction to krill oil.



Be sure to try NSP's [Krill Oil w/K2 \(60 Softgel Caps\)](#) from Nature's Sunshine.

References

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Yours in Good Health!

Sincerely,

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