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## OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

**A**part from vitamins, there are also essential fatty acids that are very important for our health because the body cannot produce them itself and they are only available in food products.

They are so important that some of them, the essential Omega-3 fatty acids, are found in the placenta and are mainly absorbed by the foetus. Later, the baby can also take in this type of essential fatty acids through the mother's milk, as it is one of the most important components.

It has been demonstrated that after several consecutive pregnancies, Western mothers can become victims of the "baby-blues" or post-natal depression. According to the scientific journal, *The Lancet*, there are statistics relating to the effect of depression in Malaysia, Japan and Singapore, where there are between 3 and 20 times less cases of depression than in countries like Germany, France or U.S.A. According to this publication, in oriental countries such as those mentioned, there is generally a much higher consumption of fish and seafood than in the West.

Two thirds of the human brain is made up of fatty acids, particularly in the membranes and the nerve cells. It is evident, therefore, that our daily diet has a direct influence on the quality of these membranes.



To put it simply, the so-called saturated fats such as those found in butter and animal fats are solid at room temperature and their rigidity can be reflected in the rigidity of the brain cells.

On the other hand, the polyunsaturated fats, that are found, for example, in avocados and olive oil, are liquid at room temperature, which makes the brain cells softer, meaning that they interact better.

In experiments performed with mice, the effects of the lack of intake of Omega-3 fatty acids can be seen when they are eliminated completely. It is observed that in a short space of time, just a few weeks, the mice become anxious, they cannot learn new tasks, and they do not react correctly, demonstrating stress and panic.

At the same time, it seems that a diet that is lacking in Omega-3 reduces the experience of pleasure and the mice need a high dose of morphine to get them to take any kind of interest, as this drug is the symbol of easy pleasure.

Also, a team of French scientists has demonstrated that a diet that is rich in Omega-3 fatty acids, such as that of the Inuit eskimos who have a daily intake of up to 16 grams of fish oil, in the long term increases the production of neurotransmitters, energy, good mood, and basically the emotional part of the brain.

This involves dopamine, the neurotransmitter responsible for the effects in energy and euphoria, as in the case of amphetamines and cocaine.