



healthcare for the whole family

Fat: The Good, the Bad, and the Omegas

A common misconception today is that fat is bad for you. The reason is that we have been getting our fats mixed up. There are “good fats” which are helpful in treatment and prevention of almost every disease, and there are “bad fats” which can cause, or contribute to, almost any disease process. The “good fats” are generally found in fish, nuts, seeds, and soy. But what makes the “good fats” good? “Good fats” contain essential fatty acids (EFAs) that our bodies need in order to function properly. These are not found in the “bad fats.” In fact, the “bad fats” can overwhelm our bodies so that they cannot reap the benefits of the “good fats.”

The two major types of EFAs found in “good fats” are Omega 3 (linolenic) and Omega 6 (linoleic). Although with today’s typical diet, most people are deficient in both Omega 3 and Omega 6, Omega 3 tends to be at lower levels in most cases. Omega 3’s most important function is as an anti-inflammatory. This is why it can be helpful as part of a treatment protocol for joint pain (arthritis), heart disease, cancer and hormonal imbalances. Omega 3 can also help lower your “bad fats,” like triglycerides, and increase your good cholesterol (HDL). Your best source of Omega 3 is fish oils. A vegetarian option is flax oil. A deficiency in Omega 6 can also lead to the above mentioned health concerns. It is often supplemented with evening primrose oil and borage oil. Ideally, our diets should have a balance of these two EFAs.

At A New Leaf our patients have the option of filling out a diet diary which we assess and help them plan a program that is right for their bodies’ unique needs.