

# ***Fish** for Your **Heart***



Bord Iascaigh Mhara  
Irish Sea Fisheries Board



## ***Fish for your heart***

Did you know that fish helps to prevent heart disease? Heart disease is one of the leading causes of death in Ireland, but people who eat fish can cut their risk of heart disease by up to 50%\*. You need to eat fish at least once a week to get the full benefit for your heart. Fish has other benefits for your health and this is why nutritionists recommend that we eat fish twice a week and include at least one oil-rich fish.

### ***How can fish help prevent heart disease?***

Oil-rich fish is an excellent source of beneficial omega 3 fats. Your body cannot make these special fats, so you must eat foods with omega 3 fats regularly for good health. As few other foods contain omega 3 fats, fish is one of the best foods to eat.

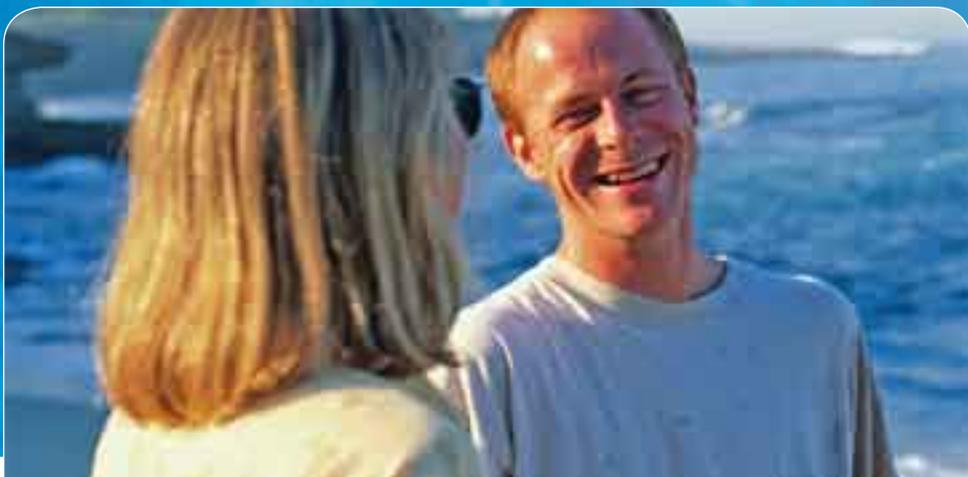
Omega 3 fats help to lower triglycerides and may help to lower cholesterol.

Salmon, herring, trout, mackerel and sardines are all examples of oil-rich fish.

### ***How can omega 3 fats help your heart?***

*They can:*

- *Help to lower triglycerides*
- *Help to stop blood clots blocking your arteries*
- *Help to keep the rhythm of your heart healthy*
- *May help to lower blood pressure*



<i>What is cholesterol?</i>	<i>What does it do?</i>	<i>When is it a problem?</i>
<p>Cholesterol is a type of fat found in your blood.</p> <p>There are 2 types of cholesterol:</p> <p>LDL – bad cholesterol HDL – good cholesterol</p>	<p>You need small amounts of cholesterol for all your body cells and for some of your hormones.</p>	<p>When there is too much LDL or bad cholesterol in your blood, it starts to stick to the walls of your arteries and can eventually block them. If this happens in your heart it causes a heart attack. If this happens in an artery leading to your brain, it can cause a stroke.</p>
<i>What are triglycerides?</i>	<i>What do they do?</i>	<i>When are they a problem?</i>
<p>Triglycerides are another type of fat found in your blood.</p>	<p>They are the form fat takes when it travels around your body.</p>	<p>If your triglycerides are too high it increases your chances of having a heart attack or stroke.</p>

## *Is there anything else I can do to reduce my chances of getting heart disease?*

Here is a list of some of the things you can do:

- Be a healthy weight
- Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables
- Eat wholegrain cereals and breads
- Choose lean meats and trim the fat off meat before cooking
- Choose low fat dairy products
- Choose low fat spreads labelled ‘high in polyunsaturates’ or ‘high in monounsaturates’
- Use low fat ways of cooking such as baking, boiling or grilling instead of frying
- Be more active – at least 30 minutes of any physical activity most days
- Drink alcohol sensibly. The limits for alcohol intake are 14 standard drinks a week for women and 21 standard drinks a week for men  
1 standard drink (10 grams of alcohol)  
= one half pint of beer, stout or lager  
= one small glass of wine  
= one measure of spirits (whiskey, vodka or gin)  
Try to have some alcohol free days every week
- Stop smoking. For support and advice on quitting call the National Smokers’ Quitline on 1850 201 203

***And remember to eat at least 2 portions of fish a week, including one portion of oil-rich fish.***

*Fish is one of nature's healthiest foods and is an important part of a healthy, balanced diet for people of all ages. It is naturally low in saturated fat, full of vitamins and minerals, and oil-rich fish is an excellent source of essential omega 3 fats. Fish is also one of nature's most versatile foods. It is easy to digest and can be used in many ways to create tasty, healthy and satisfying meals.*

### **Spicy Salmon**

Serves 4

#### **Ingredients:**

4 x salmon portions  
Cajun seasoning

#### **Method**

- Rinse salmon, pat dry using kitchen paper
- Dust all sides of salmon with cajun seasoning
- Place salmon on baking tray and bake in pre-heated oven 200° C/400° F/ Gas 5 for 10-12 minutes.

Serve with baked or boiled potatoes, vegetables of choice or salad.



### **Grilled Mackerel with Spinach**

Serves 4

#### **Ingredients:**

8 mackerel fillets – pin bones removed  
200g prepared spinach  
1 teaspoon whole-grain mustard  
Freshly milled pepper  
A little olive oil

#### **Method**

- Brush fish lightly with olive oil and season
- Grill for approx. 4 minutes on each side
- Meanwhile, wilt spinach and add mustard
- Place spinach on fillet and top with second fillet.

Serve with vegetables or tossed salad.



Irish Nutrition &  
Dietetic Institute

*For delicious  
easy fish recipes visit  
[www.bim.ie](http://www.bim.ie)*



Bord Iascaigh Mhara  
Irish Sea Fisheries Board

