



Publix GreenWise Market Magazine - Winter 2011

Seeds of Greatness

[See other articles in this edition](#)

A sprinkle a day of flaxseeds may protect you from a broken heart.

The same plant that provides linoleum and linen tablecloths can also claim a rightful place in your pantry. "Flaxseeds are one of the best foods you can eat for preventing heart disease," says Janet Brill, Ph.D., a registered dietitian in Coral Springs, Florida, and author of *Cholesterol Down* (Crown, 2006). "The seeds have a mild, nutty flavor that tastes great, and they're simple to add to your diet. I think of flaxseeds as the ultimate health food."

A TRIO OF TALENTS

Flaxseeds boast generous amounts of three heart-healthy substances:

- **Omega-3 fatty acids.** "Flaxseeds are most famous for their rich cache of ALA, the plant version of omega-3 fatty acids," says Brill. Omega-3s in fish decrease triglycerides and reduce fat buildup in arteries. The evidence for ALA is less clear-cut, but the American Heart Association recommends consuming more of it.
- **Lignans.** Flaxseeds are the richest known source of lignans. In a recent study of this antioxidant, 90 people with high cholesterol were given flaxseed lignans daily for three months, with favorable results for men with LDL (bad) cholesterol and total cholesterol, notes lead researcher Suzanne Hendrich, Ph.D., professor of food science and human nutrition at Iowa State University. However, for reasons that are still unclear, the same effect wasn't seen in women.
- **Fiber.** The soluble fiber in flaxseeds is the type shown to help lower cholesterol when included in a diet that is low in saturated and trans fats.

THE FACES OF FLAX

Flaxseed is widely available in four main forms:

1. **Whole seeds.** Most experts recommend grinding seeds in a coffee grinder so they're easier to digest. Whole seeds can pass through your body undigested, so unless you grind them, you'll miss some of their health benefits. Store seeds in an airtight container at room temperature for up to a year and grind as needed.
2. **Ground seeds.** Whether purchased or home-ground, keep them fresh by storing in the freezer in an airtight container for up to six months.
3. **Flaxseed oil.** This liquid provides nearly 8 grams of ALA per tablespoon but doesn't contain lignans and fiber. Store in the fridge.
4. **Supplements.** The Institute of Medicine has set the adequate intake for omega-3 fatty acids, including ALA, at 1.1 grams per day for women and 1.6 grams per day for men. The amount of ALA in flaxseed supplements varies, so check the label to see how much you're really getting.

Talk to your doctor before starting flaxseed supplements, because they aren't recommended for everyone. Caution is advised for people with bleeding disorders or taking blood-thinning medications and men with (or at high risk for) prostate cancer.

Fast Flax

Flaxseeds and flaxseed oil are used as ingredients in a growing number of prepared foods. You'll find them in snack bars, cereals, muffins and frozen waffles and in omega-3 enriched items, such as pasta, bread, eggs and dairy products. You can also add them to foods. Janet Brill, Ph.D., recommends 2 tablespoons of ground flaxseed a day. She offers these quick ideas:

- Stir ground seeds into oatmeal.
- Top low-fat yogurt with ground flaxseed and chopped walnuts.
- Add ground seeds or a tablespoon of flaxseed oil to smoothies.

Start Your Day Off Right!

Each serving of **Publix GreenWise Market All Natural Flax Flakes** provides 500 mg of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids and contains no artificial flavors, colors or preservatives.

Other Articles in this Edition:

- [We Did It!](#)
- [Formaggio Italiano!](#)
- [Hazardous Waist](#)
- [Why You Should Learn to Love \(And Pronounce\) Quinoa](#)
- [Growing a Pet-Safe Garden](#)
- [Wake-Up Call](#)
- [Good Riddance to Old Meds](#)
- [Floss-ology](#)

[Publix GreenWise Market Magazine library](#)