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In a large Danish study, women who consumed little to no fish and other sources of omega-3 fatty acids had a greater risk of cardiovascular disease than women who regularly consumed fish.

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS AND CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE IN WOMEN

Many previous studies have shown a link between the positive effects of omega-3 fatty acids, and their ability to reduce the occurrence of heart disease. However the majority of these studies look at men rather than women. A current study looked at a cohort of 48,627 Danish women. Their average age was 29.9 years at recruitment, and the follow-up period took place over a period of 12 years.

Information on diet was taken from a food frequency questionnaire and telephone interviews. The types of fish most commonly consumed by the women in Denmark were cod, plaice, salmon, herring, and mackerel. The women were categorized based on fish consumption, the five groups were: (1) 0-3 g/d (grams/day); (2) 3-10 g/d; (3) 10-20 g/d; (4) 20-30 g/d; and (5) >30 g/d.

During the follow-up period, 577 events of cardiovascular disease were identified. Adjustments were made for physical activity, BMI, smoking, education, cohabitant status, parity, occupation, alcohol intake, total energy intake, saturated fat intake, dietary fiber intake, and trans-fatty acid intake. After the adjustments, the group who ate between 0-3 grams of fish per day was 54% more likely to have cardiovascular disease than those who ate greater than 30 grams of fish per day,

Getting adequate omega-3 fatty acids from fish and supplements may be a safe and effective way to help maintain good cardiovascular health and potentially reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

Marin Strøm, Thorhallur I. Halldorsson, Erik L. Mortensen, Christian Torp-Pedersen, Sjurdur F. Olsen. Fish, n-3 Fatty Acids, and Cardiovascular Diseases in Women of Reproductive Age: A Prospective Study in a Large National Cohort. Hypertension, 2011; DOI:10.1161/HYPERTENSIONAHA.111.179382