

FROM ABSTRACT:

There is a general belief among doctors, that patients with arthritis need nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). Implicit in this view is that these patients require the symptomatic relief provided by inhibiting synthesis of nociceptive prostaglandin E₂, a downstream product of the enzyme cyclo-oxygenase (COX), which is inhibited by NSAIDs.

However, the concept of 'safe' NSAIDs has collapsed following a multiplicity of observations establishing increased risk for cardiovascular events associated with NSAID use, especially but not uniquely with the new COX-2-selective NSAIDs. This mandates greater parsimony in the use of these agents.

Fish oils contain a natural inhibitor of COX, reduce reliance on NSAIDs, and reduce cardiovascular risk through multiple mechanisms. Fish oil thus warrants consideration as a component of therapy for arthritis, especially rheumatoid arthritis, in which its symptomatic benefits are well established.

A major barrier to the therapeutic use of fish oil in inflammatory diseases is ignorance of its mechanism, range of beneficial effects, safety profile, availability of suitable products, effective dose, latency of effects and instructions for administration. This review provides an evidence-based resource for doctors and patients who may choose to prescribe or take fish oil.

"The anti-inflammatory dose of fish oil (from body of fish, not cod liver oil) requires delivery of 2.7 g or more of LC n₃ PUFAs daily, and that higher doses are also safe and effective."

[Very Important]

"Fish oil (obtained from the body of the fish) is preferable to cod liver oil, which can deliver undesirable amounts of vitamin A at anti-inflammatory doses."

"The symptomatic benefit of fish oil in RA can be delayed 2–3 months," and "it is important that potential users understand that this delay exists."

The taste of liquid fish oil can be avoided by taking it with juice using a method that avoids contact of fish oil with the lips where the fish oil taste is experienced:

- 1) Pour 1-2 oz. of juice (e.g. orange, tomato, apple, etc.) into two small 'shot' glasses.
- 2) "Layer the desired dose of fish oil onto the juice in one glass – do not stir."
- 3) "Swallow the juice and fish oil with a single gulp, avoiding contact with the lips (where the fish oil can be tasted)."
- 4) "Immediately sip the juice in the other glass slowly through the lips. This will remove any oil from the lips." If there is any gastric reflux, it is important to reduce the amount of juice chaser.
- 5) "Take the fish oil immediately before a solid meal and without further fluid. This avoids floating of the oil on fluid in the stomach and favours mixing of the fish oil with food and passage from the stomach into the intestine. If reflux (repeating taste) becomes a problem, then split the dose before morning and evening meals. Alternatively, take the dose then lie on the left side for at least 15 min. In this position the oil floats into the passage from the stomach to the small intestine."