Fish Oil and Cardiovascular Effects

There has been promising information about the cardiovascular protection that fish can offer. Fish oil contains omega-3 fatty acids (eicosapentaenoic acid and docosahexaenoic acid). Fish has been shown in studies to decrease the risk of heart disease, heart attacks, and sudden cardiac death. Fish oil has also been shown to have antiarrhythmic effects, reduce triglyceride levels, and inhibit blood clotting. So far, the studies have had people eating fish, not fish oil supplements. Fish also contains Coenzyme Q-10, which acts as a cofactor in several metabolic pathways and as an antioxidant. It could play a role in decreasing hypertension, angina, arrhythmias, and heart failure symptoms. Coenzyme Q-10 can interact with warfarin. The American Heart Association suggests that people eat 2 to 3 servings of fish per week. The AHA suggests fish oil supplements only for people with high triglyceride levels. The best fish to eat are cold water, fatty fish such as tuna or salmon. Side effects of fish oil include fishy taste, gas and diarrhea.

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