

'Omega-3 Score' and 'DHA Score' – Patient Education Sheet

Question: What is the 'Omega-3 Score' test? What is the 'DHA Score' test?

Answer: The 'Omega-3 Score' is a measurement of the summed levels of the omega-3 fatty acids (also called n-3 fatty acids) in a sample of blood. The 'DHA Score' is a specific measure of the omega-3 fatty acid called docosahexaenoic acid (DHA). These two scores are intended to provide complementary testing to that already being provided to you via the healthcare system and your healthcare professionals.

Question: Why is the 'Omega-3 Score' and the 'DHA Score' important?

Answer: Published clinical and population studies have shown that, as the level of omega-3 fatty acid and DHA increase in blood serum phospholipid, the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD) and fatal heart disease decreases. This relationship was found even when controlling for the blood cholesterol levels. Higher omega-3 and DHA levels are considered to provide benefit by many mechanisms including anti-arrhythmic and anti-thrombotic effects, improved endothelial relaxation, and other cardioprotective effects.

Question: How do I get my 'Omega-3 Score' and 'DHA Score'?

Answer: Contact your physician or medical clinic that offer access to these tests. The small blood sample via venipuncture (arm) takes less than one minute to collect.

Question: Do I have to fast for these tests?

Answer: No – the results are identical whether you are in the fed or fasted state when the blood sample is taken.

Question: What can be done if my 'Omega-3 Score' or 'DHA Score' shows my values to be less than desirable with respect to the risk of heart disease?

Answer: Your physician can offer you a dietary and/or supplementation program which can bring your scores into a more desirable range within 4-6 weeks as verified by re-testing.

Selected Medical References:

- Simon et al., Serum fatty acids and the risk of coronary heart disease. *Am. J. Epidemiol.* 142:469-476 (1995).
- Albert et al., Blood levels of long-chain n-3 fatty acids and the risk of sudden death. *New Engl. J. Med.* 346: 1113-1118 (2002).
- Dewailly et al., n-3 Fatty acids and cardiovascular disease risk factors among the Inuit of Nunavik. *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 74:464-473 (2001).
- Lemaitre et al., n-3 Polyunsaturated fatty acids, fatal ischemic heart disease, nonfatal myocardial infarction in older adults: the cardiovascular health study. *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 77: 319-325 (2003).

(This information is provided for educational purposes)