

FOCUS ON KRILL OIL



Looking to increase your intake of healthy omega-3 fats? These sea creatures provide a great alternative source, says dietician **Carrie Ruxton**

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What is it?

Most of us have heard of omega-3 fatty acids – the healthy fats found in oily fish. However, you may not know that krill provides another way to get them, along with the more popular salmon and mackerel.

Tiny shrimp-like crustaceans, krill are found in every ocean around the world. But the oil comes from a specific type of krill (*Euphausia superba*), which live in the cold waters of the Antarctic Ocean. Like fish oil, it's rich in the omega-3 fatty acids eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), but they're packaged differently. Fish oil omega-3 is bound to fats known as triglycerides or ethyl esters, whereas krill oil is bound to a type of fat called a phospholipid, which is easier for the body to absorb. This is key, because although krill oil contains around 60 per cent of the omega-3 found in fish oil, its effects are similar to those of fish oil at a lower dose, so you need less to get the same benefits.

Unlike fish oil, krill oil also contains choline, an essential micronutrient, and the antioxidant astaxanthin. What's more, the low levels of contaminants in the Antarctic Ocean mean krill oil is virtually free of heavy metals and mercury, which can be a concern with oily fish (although not with purified fish oils).

What is it good for?

HEART HEALTH

Canadian research has shown that krill oil lowers blood cholesterol, particularly the so-called 'bad' LDL cholesterol, as well as other dangerous blood

How much do I need?

UK recommendations for EPA and DHA are 0.45g daily, which you'll get from 2g of krill oil*, so check supplement labels. Research backs this: in one study, blood levels of EPA and DHA increased when people took 0.6g-2g of krill oil daily; in another, those taking 1-1.5g daily for three months lowered LDL cholesterol. **E**

