

# Omega-3 DHA supplements

## Information for parents

### What is omega-3 DHA?

DHA (docosahexanoic acid) is an omega-3 fat that is thought to help with brain function, and to protect it from injury. EPA is another omega-3 fat that is changed in the body to DHA. A common source of these substances is fish oil from cold water fish.

### Why is omega-3 DHA used?

During pregnancy the unborn baby receives a high supply of DHA from the mother's blood through the placenta, particularly during the third trimester of the pregnancy. However preterm infants will miss out on this supply and receive only the small amounts of DHA that is supplied in breast milk or infant formula, perhaps increasing their risk of developmental disorders and learning difficulties.

One large Australian study researched the benefits of giving omega-3 DHA to breastfeeding mothers and discovered that very preterm children had less major disability and very preterm girls had higher intelligence quotients if fed DHA enriched breast milk.

### What product to use?

One OMEGA Brain® capsule taken twice a day provided similar quantities of omega-3 DHA and EPA to the capsules taken in the study. **Do not exchange this product for a different brand of fish oils.**

### Important note

Do not take omega-3 DHA supplementation if you are taking blood thinning medicines such as heparin, warfarin or aspirin.

### Possible side effects

Side effects are uncommon but the following have been reported:

- Diarrhoea, abdominal pain, bloating, flatulence
- Fatigue
- Decreased glucose tolerance
- Prolonged bleeding time
- Skin irritation

### More information

Further information can be obtained from the KEMH Pharmacy Drug Information Service.

Phone: (08) 93402723 (Monday - Friday 8.30am-5pm)

This information is available in alternative formats upon request

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