

# Studies Back Seal Oil



## HARP SEAL OIL FOR AN OMEGA-3 SOURCE

By Sumaira Raza

In today's society, human diet is vastly different from that of our ancestors; hunting, fishing, and natural foods were an important part of their lifestyle. Sadly enough, over time, gradually, we have replaced wholesome foods with French fries, chips, ice cream, and other processed & convenience foods, stripped of most essential fatty acids. As a result, today's diet is characterized by a dangerous omega-3 / omega-6 imbalance: irrefutably overabundant in omega-6.

Omega-3 is an "essential" fatty acid that cannot be produced by the body and must be obtained from external sources, either through diet or supplements. The current omega-3 deficiency, coupled with its omega-6 imbalanced ratio is a prime contributing factor to over 50 conditions and diseases.

An initial landmark study (Band and Dyerberg in 1971) on Greenland's Inuit people, and other significant subsequent researches, all point to a strong correlation between omega-3 poly unsaturated fatty acids (PUFA) and cardiovascular disease (CDV). From the 1971 study, "The interest in marine oils stemmed from the observation of the diet of Inuit people in which fish, as well as, seal meat and blubber was important. The incidence of CDV amongst the Inuit population was considerably less than that of the Danish population, despite their high fat consumption."<sup>1</sup>

A traditional diet high in seal, hunting rituals and food-sharing for the community well-being were customs viewed by the Inuit as health practices for the individual mind/body/soul, and as sources of personal and political power. The Inuit people consumed much more seal than fish, a staple of their diet, and used it

for heating, clothing and tools.

"The beneficial health effects of omega-3 PUFA have been attributed to their ability to lower serum triglyceride and cholesterol."<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, research has indicated that omega-3 can reduce the risk of primary cardiac arrest by 70%, by reducing blood vessel blockages.

Other work (Dr. Leof of Harvard Medical School) has found that PUFA's can prevent sudden death from irregular heart beats following a heart attack, while another study reported that a diet rich in omega-3 can reduce chances of a second (fatal) heart attack by 30%.

The *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Vol. 71 (suppl), January 2000, reiterated that omega-3 fatty acids decrease risk of sudden death and arrhythmia, thrombosis (blood clot), triglyceride levels, growth of atherosclerotic plaque, blood pressure, and improve arterial health.

Harp seal oil acts as a "cholesterol cutting" superfood. As well, by helping to fight free radical damage, arterial lesions and plaque build up associated with atherosclerosis can lessen; elasticity of arteries can improve; pressure of hypertension can ease off. The highest source of EPA (Eicosapentenoic acid), except in human breast milk, harp seal oil can further reduce inflammation and blood clots within the cardiovascular system.

In fact, seal oil is a superior source of omega-3 in many ways. Unlike omega-3 (ALA) from vegetal sources, the body does not require any conversion of ALA into EPA and DHA. This conversion relying on too many factors, not only takes time to occur, but it is also difficult to measure. According to the previously Government Report<sup>1</sup>, "In comparing seal blubber oil with fish oils, assimilation of seal oil into the body is more efficient than fish oils. Higher than most fish oils, the total omega-3 content of seal oil is 20%-25%, making seal oil capsules a much more effective source of omega-3 than fish itself.

Sources: *Government Report*, produced by Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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