

About Flaxseed Oil

There are two types of flaxseed oil available — conventional and organic. These types of flaxseed oil differ in the way in which the seed is grown. Flaxseed oil results from pressing the oil from the seed. Flaxseed oil provides more ALA (approximately 55-58 percent) on a per weight basis in comparison to whole or milled seed (approximately 15-18 percent).

Recommended Intake of Flaxseed and Flaxseed Oil

At the present time, there is no Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for EFAs in the United States.³⁵ However, Health Canada has established a Recommended Nutrient Intake (RNI) for EFAs, specifying the minimum daily intake of ALA should be 0.5 percent of total energy.³ Similarly, the British Nutrition Task Force also recommends a minimum daily intake of 0.5 percent energy from ALA.³⁶ In September of 2002, the prestigious National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine (IOM) released recommendations for several dietary constituents directed toward reducing the onset of chronic disease.³⁷ The Health and Human Service's Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (U.S.), in collaboration with Health Canada, commissioned a report entitled "Dietary Reference Intakes for Energy, Carbohydrates, Fiber, Fat, Protein and Amino Acids (Macronutrients)." IOM set an acceptable level of 1.6 grams per day of ALA for men and 1.1 grams per day for women.

To put the Health Canada recommendation into perspective, based on an average intake of 2,500 calories per day, the following forms of flax would provide the RNI for ALA:

Flaxseed oil: 2 to 3 grams of flaxseed oil, which is equivalent to 2 to 3 softgels (1000 mg), or approximately ½ tsp (2 mL) of oil.

Whole or milled flaxseed: Approximately 1–2 Tbsp (15–25 mL) of milled flaxseed (approximately 30 g) may provide adequate supplementation of both ALA and lignans.