



2<sup>nd</sup> December 2008

## HEALTH SUPPLEMENTS INFORMATION SERVICE (HSIS) REAFFIRMS THE BENEFITS OF FISH OILS

In response to an article published in the Sunday Times (30/11/08) regarding Fish Oils, the Health Supplements Information Service (HSIS) would like to reiterate:

- the benefits of fish, especially oily fish, in the maintenance of good health
- the important role of fish oil supplements for those who do not eat the recommended two portions of fish a week.

Dr Mason, scientific advisor to HSIS notes: “Research shows that two out of three people in the UK, so the majority of adults, do not eat the two portions of fish a week that is recommended by the Food Standards Agency<sup>12</sup>, either because it doesn’t fit in with their lifestyle or simply because they don’t like fish, especially oily fish. As a result, there is a huge percentage of the population who are missing out on their vital omega 3 weekly intakes. Fish oil supplements can therefore provide a valuable way of bridging the nutritional gap for those people; whose diets may be lacking in the essential nutrients provided by fish, including those whose intake is erratic.”

“Oily fish is rich in Omega 3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, particularly EPA and DHA. EPA can help with heart health and circulation, and may help to discourage the formation of blood clots. DHA is important in infant development. Omega 3 is also associated with improved IQ in children and mental function in all age groups.”

“There is no formal recommended daily allowance for Omega 3 but the UK Department of Health recommends 200mg of EPA/DHA per day, whereas the British Nutrition Foundation recommended 1250mg daily. The equivalent intake of the FSA’s recommended portions is 450mg of Omega 3 a day. However, only just over one quarter of adults (27 per cent) eat oily fish at all, and their mean intake of omega 3 fatty acids is 270mg, half of which comes from oily fish. **For the other 73 per cent of the population who do not consume oily fish, their mean intake of omega 3 fatty acids is only 147mg daily.**”

“The statistics for young people are even worse. Among those aged 19 to 24 years old, only 13 per cent of women and 3 per cent of men eat fish<sup>3</sup>. Only 3 per cent of children and 15 per cent of adults from a low income background report eating oily fish<sup>4</sup>. Again such statistics raise the urgent need for people, unwilling to try or consume oily fish, to reach for cod liver oil or a daily omega-3 supplement. “

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<sup>1</sup> National Diet and Nutrition Survey, adults aged 19 to 64 years., Vol 1. Types and quantities of foods consumed, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Low income diet and nutrition survey. Vol 2. Food consumption. Nutrition intake. A survey carried out on behalf of the Food Standards Agency. London: The Stationery Office 2007.

<sup>3</sup> National Diet and Nutrition Survey, adults aged 19 to 64 years, Vol 3, Vitamin and mineral intake and urinary analysis. HMSO London 2003.

<sup>4</sup> Low income diet and nutrition survey. Vol 2. Food consumption. Nutrition intake. A survey carried out on behalf of the Food Standards Agency. London: The Stationery Office 2007.