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A recent study of people over 60 years old found that even short-term supplementation with omega-3 fatty acids may improve heart function.

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS IMPROVE HEART HEALTH IN THE ELDERLY

It is well-known that omega-3 fatty acids can improve long-term heart health. A study published in the April 2005 volume of the medical journal *Chest* indicates that omega-3 fatty acids contained in fish oil may improve heart function even after short-term supplementation.

Researchers followed 58 people aged 60 or older who were randomly assigned to take either marine-derived omega-3s (fish oil) or plant-derived omega-3s (alpha-linolenic acid) from soy oil. The oils were taken as 1-gram capsules, twice daily for six months.

A measure of heart-healthiness called heart rate variability (HRV) was assessed every other day. Supplementation with 2 grams a day of fish oil was associated with a significant increase in HRV. The supplementation with 2 grams a day of soy oil also significantly improved HRV, but to a lesser degree than the fish oil.

In addition to other factors known to improve heart health, such as exercise, weight loss, and stress reduction, taking a daily omega-3 oil supplement may therefore reduce the risk of developing irregular heart rhythm or succumbing to sudden cardiac death.

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