

## **Fatty Fish (Like Salmon), Not Fried Fish (Like Sticks), Is What's Good for You**

*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

04 May 2005

Trying to eat more fish for a healthy heart? Fish sticks don't count.

So says a study suggesting only fish that's broiled or baked actually protects against heart disease.

Most fish served fried are types that contain only small amounts of omega-3 fatty acids, the healthy fat that can improve cholesterol and other cardiac risk factors, scientists reported yesterday at a meeting of the American Heart Association.

"All fish meals may not be equal," said Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian of the Harvard Medical School.

A diet high in fish has long been linked with lower levels of heart disease, so much so that the heart association recommends two or more weekly servings - especially of oily fish such as salmon and tuna that are particularly high in the omega-3 fatty acids. Those healthy fats are thought to increase the so-called good HDL cholesterol and lower unhealthy triglycerides.

Scientists suspect the omega-3s may play an even broader role, so lots of research is under way to better define how fish affects heart disease and just what people should be eating to get the benefit.

Mozaffarian examined ultrasound images of the hearts of 5,000 older Americans who were given a questionnaire about their diets. After accounting for other factors that play a role in heart disease - including other foods - he found that people who regularly consumed broiled or baked fish were more likely to have a lower heart rate and blood pressure, and better blood flow to the heart.

In contrast, those who regularly consumed fried fish or fish sandwiches showed signs of hardening arteries and other cardiac problems.

There was little evidence of omega-3s in the blood of the fried- fish lovers, probably because the fish species that usually are served fried are cod or other lean types that are much lower in omega-3.