

Omega-3 nutritional fact, not fiction

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Omega-3 fatty acids found in fish, and some nuts and oils is the trendy food additive of the just-begun New Year, a product research specialist said.

Tropicana will unveil the first national orange juice with omega-3. Kellogg has already put it into a Kashi cereal while Unilever added it to its I Can't Believe It's Not Butter substitute, USA Today said. Even pet foods are on the omega-3 bandwagon.

Omega-3 has been shown to reduce the risks of heart disease and other ailments, including Alzheimer's. Food marketers' primary market is baby boomers; four in 10 adults seek more of it in their diets, according to a HealthFocus USA Trend Survey.

Omega-3 showed up in 120 new food products a scant two years ago. In 2006, it appeared in about 250, estimates Mintel, the product research specialist.

"Omega-3 is the hot ingredient," says Lynn Dornblaser, a Mintel analyst.

While the American Heart Association and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration give omega-3 the nod, not all nutritionists encourage adding omega-3 to a diet at the expense of consuming foods where it occurs naturally such as salmon.

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