

### **Use of Omega 3's – "Fish Oil"- Essential Fatty Acids (EFA)**

There are many contributing factors to why some mothers have lower fat content in their milk.

Babies of mothers with low fat content milk usually present with a healthy exam but with a flat or below 15 gm/day growth pattern.

Several evaluations can assist the determination of cause:

- Feeding frequency.
- Pattern of feeding such as one side feedings, short feedings.
- Baseline milk supply.
- Infant milk transfer efficiency.
- Overproduction of milk. Babies of moms with milk overproduction receive higher protein milk. The mom's milk fat may be adequate but the baby is not receiving it.
- Mom's rate of postpartum weight loss.
- Mom's intake of overall calories, fats and proteins in her diet.

Your Doctor and Lactation Consultant will work with you and your baby in determining the cause. If your milk is lower in fat content, they may suggest you supplement your diet with "Fish oil" (Omega 3's).

Omega 3's are not a prescription medication. Most pharmacies, department stores with pharmacies and health food stores sell quality fish oil.

**Step 1** - Choose a supplement that has a total of 1,000 – 2,000 mg (1-2 grams) listed on the **front label**.

**Step 2** – Next, look on the **back label** on the bottle. Listed should be both **EPA and DHA**. **Each** of these essential fatty acids should **equal or exceed 400 mg**. Most times they will not be the same mg. The total of them will not equal the mg listed on the front.

**Step 3** – Next, look at "**Serving size**". The number represents how many capsules you need to take each day. It is best to divide the doses and take with food. Storing the bottle in the refrigerator or freezer will prevent or decrease the "fishy" smell or the "fishy burp" some experience with taking fish oil supplements.

**Fish oil supplements will increase fat content in breast milk within 3-7 days.**

#### **Foods with Omega 3's**

##### **Foods high in DHA and EPA:**

Coldwater fatty fish such as, salmon, sardines, mackerel, herring and tuna; Shellfish such as shrimp

Limit fish intake to 12 oz/week. (due to mercury)

##### **Some EPA and DHA:**

Catfish and tilapia

Fortified foods as listed on milk, yogurt, eggs and breads

##### **Lean proteins:**

Skinless chicken, milk, yogurt, lower fat cheeses, eggs, pork tenderloin, turkey, soy, lean beef, lentils/beans

##### **Vegan source:**

Seaweed has DHA