CDC's Second Nutrition Report

First-time measurements of 24 fatty acids in blood plasma in the U.S. population

Background

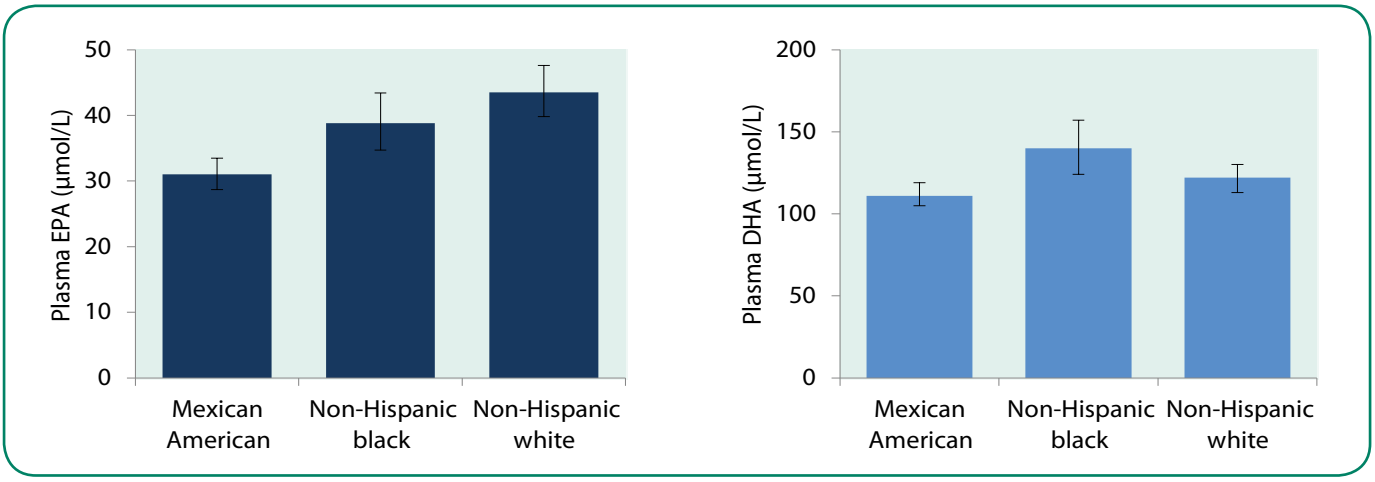
Fatty acids are the building blocks of fats. Saturated fatty acids commonly are found in animal fat, including dairy products. Olive, canola, and safflower oils are rich in monounsaturated fatty acids. Soybean, corn, and cottonseed oils as well as fatty fish are good sources of polyunsaturated fatty acids.

Intake recommendations

Dietary Guidelines for Americans advise

- Consuming less than 10% of calories from saturated fatty acids and replacing them with monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fatty acids to help reduce the risk of heart disease.
- Increasing the amount and variety of seafood eaten.
- Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding to eat 8 to 12 ounces of seafood weekly from a variety of seafood types.

Heart healthy n-3 polyunsaturated fatty acid levels in plasma by race/ethnicity



SOURCE: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) 2003 - 2004

Plasma levels of eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), which typically is derived from seafood and supplements, were higher in non-Hispanic black and white adults compared to Mexican-American adults. Circulating levels of the related long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acid docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) were higher in non-Hispanic black adults compared to Mexican-American and non-Hispanic white adults. Tracking fatty acid levels over time will show progress toward more heart-healthy diets.

The *Second Nutrition Report* provides:

- Reference information for physicians and scientists to detect high or low nutrient levels in people
- A look at nutrient levels over time to detect trends of health significance
- The nutrition status of specific populations for nutrient deficiencies

Other report findings

- In general, young adults had lower levels of fatty acids.
- Fatty acid levels were generally similar in men and women.
- For most fatty acids, no consistent race/ethnic pattern could be found.

Additional information about dietary fat is available online at **http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/basics/fat/index.html**

Second National Report on Biochemical Indicators of Diet and Nutrition in the U.S. Population **www.cdc.gov/nutritionreport**

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