

Hemp:

An Excellent Source of Valuable Essential Fatty Acids

By Martine Carlina

If you are deficient in essential fatty acids (EFA's), there's a good chance you're suffering from any number of common disorders and ailments. Our bodies require over 20 essential fats, two of which the body must receive through the diet, as it cannot make them on its own. These two fatty acids are referred to as omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids.

These fats are called "essential" because without them our cells, hormones, and neurotransmitters are literally starved of the very nutrients they need to function properly. Symptoms of EFA deficiency in adults can include PMS, diabetes, arthritis, skin disorders (such as psoriasis and eczema), high cholesterol, impaired wound healing, cardiovascular disease and obesity. In children, symptoms of EFA deficiency are allergies, skin disorders, dry skin and brittle nails, hyperactivity, impaired brain function, behavioral disorders, and acne.

Hempseed products can easily be incorporated in the diet. Unrefined hempseed oil is dark green in color and has a light nutty flavor. There are many varieties of hemp available on the market and they can vary in taste, as well as GLA content. Hempseed oil can be used in salads, dips and appetizers, and it's a great addition to a protein shake or smoothie. Some varieties are so palatable that they're easily taken off the spoon.

Hulled Hemp is also an excellent source of essential fats and it has up to 40 percent of easily digestible protein. By simply removing the shell from the hemp, this raw product is ideally blended into smoothies and protein shakes or sprinkled on cereal, soups, salads, desserts, and main courses. Like flax, both the oil and hulled hemp require refrigeration once opened and you should see an expiry date on the bottle. Hempseed oil cannot be used in cooking, as it has a very low smoke point, meaning that when it smokes it creates dangerous trans-fatty acids, which we are all trying to avoid.

Once you begin incorporating hemp into your diet you'll be amazed at how your body responds. Omega-3 fatty acids will help to keep your cells clear of plaque so they can absorb nutrients and complete their job of expelling dangerous toxins. Your cells will begin to optimally nourish your brain, making sure all those neurons are firing properly. Children will get a special benefit from these essential fats, because they are growing cells much more quickly than adults and their need for essential fats is key to cell and brain development. As you start to get away from the high-carbohydrate, low-or no-fat diet and incorporate healthy fats into your lifestyle, you'll find that your body stops storing excessive sugar, which reduces cravings for empty carbohydrates. Whatever your age, hempseed is a great tasting wholefood supplement that your taste buds and body will thank you for.