

# Calwood Nutritionals, Inc.

5331 Landing Road

Elkridge, MD 21075

800.479.9942

[www.calwoodnutritionals.com](http://www.calwoodnutritionals.com)

*Interpreting Research for the Kidney Patient* - October, 2006

<sup>1</sup> Goumenos DS, Brown CB. Therapeutic approach of patients with IgA nephropathy. *Ren Fail.* 2004 Mar;26(2):171-7.

<sup>2</sup> Alexopoulos E, Stangou M, Pantzaki A, Kirmizis D, Memmos D. Treatment of severe IgA nephropathy with omega-3 fatty acids: the effect of a "very low dose" regimen. *Ren Fail.* 2004 Jul;26(4):453-9

<sup>3</sup> Donadio JV, Grande JP. The role of fish oil/omega-3 fatty acids in the treatment of IgA nephropathy. *Semin Nephrol.* 2004 May;24(3):225-43.

<sup>4</sup> Donadio JV Jr, Larson TS, Bergstralh EJ, Grande JP. A randomized trial of high-dose compared with low-dose omega-3 fatty acids in severe IgA nephropathy. *J Am Soc Nephrol.* 2001 Apr;12(4):791-9.

<sup>5</sup> Friedman AN, Moe SM, Perkins SM, Li Y, Watkins. Fish consumption and omega-3 fatty acid status and determinants in long-term hemodialysis. *Am J Kidney Dis.* 2006 Jun;47(6):1064-71.

On page 48 of his book Dr. Walser mentions in passing that fish oil is a well established method for treatment IgA Nephropathy. There is a website dealing specifically with this type of kidney failure [www.igansupport.org](http://www.igansupport.org). On this website you can find information about the use of fish oil in the article section, however, the article published cites literature only since 1994. Since 1% of the population is afflicted by IgA nephropathy, this update will provide insight as the earlier optimism on the efficacy of fish oil continues to be confirmed in small trials.

Fish oil has two types of "omega-3" fatty acids present. When derived from fish, they have a characteristic "fishy" odor. These fats are normally obtained from small, oily fish that serve as food for larger fish. It has been well established that people who have diets high in oily fish have lower levels of heart disease and high blood pressure than people who eat have diets containing mainly other meats. Eating fish at least twice or taking a supplement of 1.5 to 3 grams per day is recommended. Higher levels of supplements may cause bleeding and should be avoided.

Clinical studies on fish oil for IgA nephropathy have continued but remain small even though this type of kidney disease is common. In reviewing treatment, an ACEi (see the March and April issues) is recommended along with fish oil or corticosteroids. <sup>1</sup> When followed for 4 years, only 7% of the patients receiving a low dose of fish oil (about 1 ½ grams per day) lost more than 50% of their kidney function while nearly half of the patients who did not take fish oil lost more than 50% of their kidney function.<sup>2</sup>

Two pharmaceutical grade preparations were recommended (Omacor and Coromega) by the Mayo Clinic group<sup>3</sup> whose work was the basis for the article at the IGAN support link above. In additional studies by this group<sup>4</sup>, they found that the difference in progression of kidney failure was very significant as only 15% of the fish oil treated patients had progressed to end stage renal disease in 3 years but in the non-treated group 35% had reached dialysis.

For those of you who have high blood pressure and who are on dialysis, a recent study found that dialysis patients consumed fish in quantities far below current American Heart Association recommendations and had insufficient omega-3 levels "given their high heart disease risk."<sup>5</sup>

For the rest of you, you shouldn't be eating fish because you're on a low protein, vegetarian diet. The addition of a fish oil supplement is an inexpensive way to increase heart health and, as Dr. Walser recommends, useful in the treatment of IgA nephropathy.