

A guide to *Natural & Alternative Treatments*

What is Natural & Alternative Treatments?

Natural & Alternative Treatments is a consumer health database that includes information on herbs and supplements, drug interactions, functional foods, and alternative therapies for a variety of conditions. The information included in this database is reviewed by health professionals on the EBSCO CAM Review Board. Natural & Alternative Treatments is a companion to the Evidence Based Complimentary Medicine database.

What can I do with it?

You can use this database to find information about alternative therapies that is aimed at the general public. Each entry includes background information on the treatment/condition, a brief discussion of the scientific evidence surrounding the treatment, and safety issues and interactions to be aware of.

How do I get to it?

To get to Natural & Alternative Treatments:

- 1) Go to www.shirp.ca
- 2) Click on the "Search for articles on your topic" link under the heading "Find an Article"
- 3) Scroll down the page until you see "Natural & Alternative Treatments" in the alphabetical list
- 4) Click on the heading above the description
- 5) If you are accessing this database from outside a health region facility, you may be asked to log in if you have not done so already.



The Main Page

Natural & Alternative Treatments is divided into five sections:

1. **Conditions:** allows you to look up a specific condition. Each entry provides a short description of the condition as well as a description of potential natural & alternative treatments.
2. **Herbs & Supplements:** provides information about specific herbs and supplements including their sources, daily requirements, therapeutic dosages, safety and interaction issues, and the scientific evidence surrounding their use.
3. **Drug Interactions:** lists interaction information for specific medications/supplements.
4. **Alternative Therapies:** provides an overview of various alternative therapies and the scientific evidence behind them.
5. **Functional Foods:** provides information on “functional foods” that contain health-promoting substances or have been enriched with potentially health-promoting ingredients.

Each section is divided into an alphabetical list. You cannot search for information using a search box. The following examples illustrate the use of the different sections of the Natural & Alternative Treatments database.

Natural & Alternative Treatments

Natural & Alternative Treatments contains detailed information on more than 180 different conditions and the conventional and natural treatments used to treat them, over 200 herbs and supplements, plus drug-herb and drug-supplement interactions for more than 75 drug categories.

1. **Conditions**
Learn all about health conditions and illnesses in this A-Z Conditions guide that contains extensive science-based information on more than 180 health conditions and their natural remedies.
[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#) [\[All\]](#)
2. **Herbs & Supplements**
The latest scientific information and evidence on natural remedies and their uses can be found in this A-Z Herbs & Supplements guide - more than 200 hundred herbs, vitamins, and supplements are covered.
[1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#) [\[All\]](#)
3. **Drug Interactions**
Learn about the positive and negative ways in which herbs and supplements can interact with medications. Click on the trade or generic name of a medication to learn what you need to know about natural substances that might interact with it.
[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#) [\[All\]](#)
4. **Alternative Therapies**
Many alternative therapies have made their way into the mainstream, but how do you know what really works? From acupuncture to vega testing, our monographs cover all the latest research on alternative therapies to help you make an educated decision on whether or not to use these therapies.
[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#) [\[All\]](#)
5. **Functional Foods**
You may have heard the phrase “functional foods,” but what does it mean? What can functional foods--such as soy, oatmeal, and calcium-fortified products--do for us? And should we be eating more of them? Learn about the latest scientific evidence about the benefits of these foods.
[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [D](#) [E](#) [F](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#) [\[All\]](#)


Conditions

To search for information on treatments for **ear infections** click on the letter “E” under the heading “Conditions”.

[Conditions](#)
Learn all about health conditions and illnesses in this A-Z Conditions guide

[A](#) [B](#) [C](#) [E](#) [G](#) [H](#) [I](#) [J](#) [K](#) [L](#) [M](#) [N](#) [O](#) [P](#) [Q](#) [R](#) [S](#) [T](#) [U](#) [V](#) [W](#) [X](#) [Y](#) [Z](#) [\[All\]](#)


A list of conditions starting with the letter “E” will come up. Click on “Ear Infections” to get to the information about treating ear infections.

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E

- [Ear Infections](#)
- [Ears, Ringing In](#)
- [Easy Bruising](#)
- [Eating Disorders](#)
- [Ecchymoses](#)

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Conditions:

Ear Infections

Related Terms

- Middle Ear Infection; Otitis Media

Principal Proposed Natural Treatments

- Avoiding Passive Smoke Inhalation; [Breast-feeding](#); Herbal Ear Drop Combinations Containing [Mullein](#) and [Garlic](#); [Xylitol](#)

Other Proposed Natural Treatments

- [Andrographis](#); [Cranial Sacral Osteopathy](#); [Echinacea](#); Food Allergen Elimination; [Ginseng](#); Oral [Garlic](#); [Vitamin C](#); [Zinc](#)

Page Navigation

- [Principal Proposed Natural Treatments](#)
- [Other Proposed Natural Treatments](#)
- [References](#)

Acute otitis media (AOM) is a painful infection of the middle ear, the portion of the ear behind the eardrum. (Another form of ear infection, otitis externa or swimmer's ear, is entirely different, and is not covered here.) AOM often follows a cold, sore throat, or other respiratory illness. Although it can affect adults, this occurs primarily in infants and young children. It's estimated that by age 7, up to 95% of all U.S. children will have experienced at least one bout of AOM—it's the most common reason parents take a child to the doctor.

When the Eustachian tube connecting the upper part of the throat to the middle ear is blocked by a cold's mucus and swelling, fluids pool behind the eardrum, providing an ideal place for bacteria to grow; an infection may set in, generating even more fluid. The pressure this exerts on the eardrum can be intensely painful. The eardrum turns red and bulges. Children too young to explain their discomfort cry, fuss, and pull at their ears. They might also appear unresponsive because they can't hear well—fluid buildup in the middle ear prevents the eardrum and small bones in the ear from moving, causing temporary hearing loss.

The entry on ear infections will come up. You can scroll down the page to read it, or you can click on the page navigation links to skip to a specific section. You can also go to related entries by clicking on the links in the text.

Click on the “Return Main Menu” tab at the top of the page to return to the main page.

Herbs & Supplements

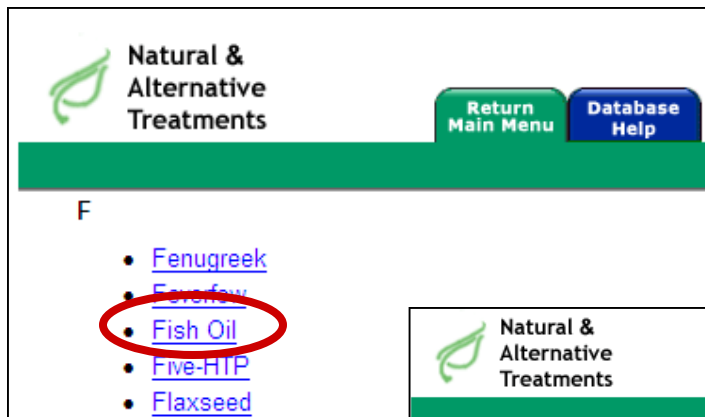
To search for information on **fish oil supplements** click on the letter “F” under the heading “Herbs & Supplements”.

[Herbs & Supplements](#)

The latest scientific information and evidence on natural remedies and supplements are covered.

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A list of herbs and supplements that start with the letter “F” will come up. Click on “Fish Oil” to get to the information about fish oil supplements.



Natural & Alternative Treatments

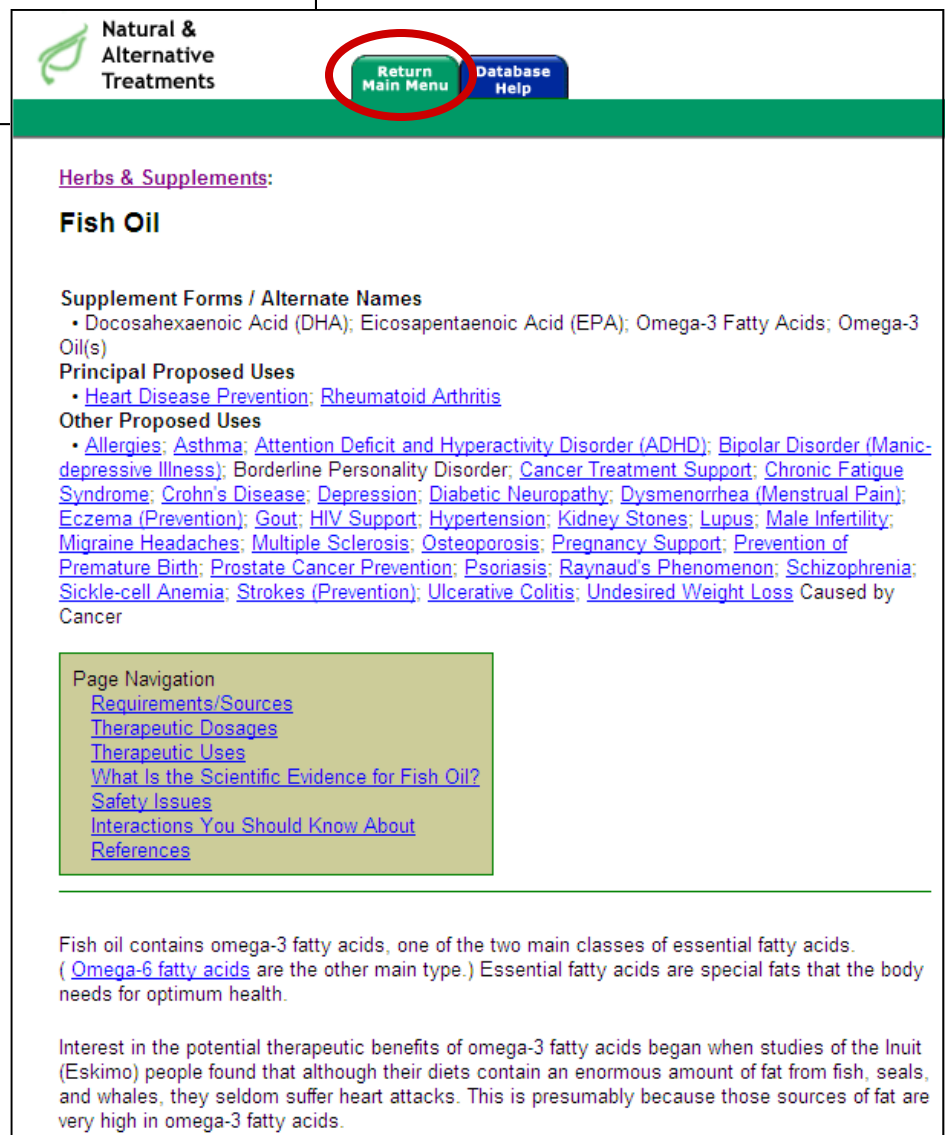
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F

- [Fenugreek](#)
- [Fenofibrate](#)
- [Fish Oil](#)
- [Five-HTP](#)
- [Flaxseed](#)

The entry on fish oil will come up. You can scroll down the page to read it, or you can click on the page navigation links to skip to a specific section. You can also go to related entries by clicking on the links in the text.

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[Herbs & Supplements:](#)

Fish Oil

Supplement Forms / Alternate Names

- Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA); Eicosapentaenoic Acid (EPA); Omega-3 Fatty Acids; Omega-3 Oil(s)

Principal Proposed Uses

- [Heart Disease Prevention](#); [Rheumatoid Arthritis](#)

Other Proposed Uses

- [Allergies](#); [Asthma](#); [Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder \(ADHD\)](#); [Bipolar Disorder \(Manic-depressive Illness\)](#); [Borderline Personality Disorder](#); [Cancer Treatment Support](#); [Chronic Fatigue Syndrome](#); [Crohn's Disease](#); [Depression](#); [Diabetic Neuropathy](#); [Dysmenorrhea \(Menstrual Pain\)](#); [Eczema \(Prevention\)](#); [Gout](#); [HIV Support](#); [Hypertension](#); [Kidney Stones](#); [Lupus](#); [Male Infertility](#); [Migraine Headaches](#); [Multiple Sclerosis](#); [Osteoporosis](#); [Pregnancy Support](#); [Prevention of Premature Birth](#); [Prostate Cancer Prevention](#); [Psoriasis](#); [Raynaud's Phenomenon](#); [Schizophrenia](#); [Sickle-cell Anemia](#); [Strokes \(Prevention\)](#); [Ulcerative Colitis](#); [Undesired Weight Loss](#) Caused by Cancer

Page Navigation

- [Requirements/Sources](#)
- [Therapeutic Dosages](#)
- [Therapeutic Uses](#)
- [What Is the Scientific Evidence for Fish Oil?](#)
- [Safety Issues](#)
- [Interactions You Should Know About](#)
- [References](#)

Fish oil contains omega-3 fatty acids, one of the two main classes of essential fatty acids. ([Omega-6 fatty acids](#) are the other main type.) Essential fatty acids are special fats that the body needs for optimum health.

Interest in the potential therapeutic benefits of omega-3 fatty acids began when studies of the Inuit (Eskimo) people found that although their diets contain an enormous amount of fat from fish, seals, and whales, they seldom suffer heart attacks. This is presumably because those sources of fat are very high in omega-3 fatty acids.

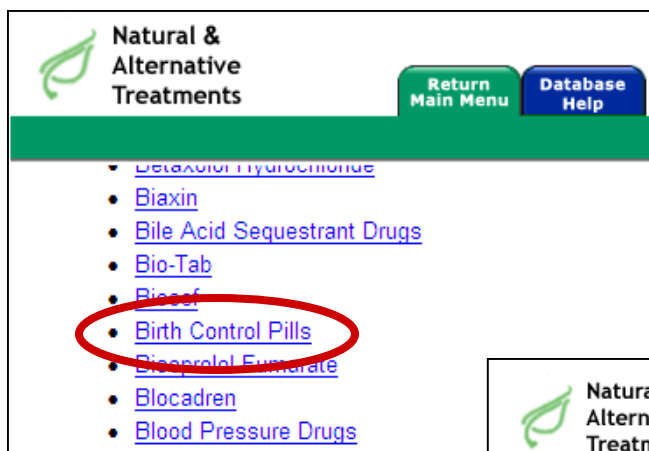
Drug Interactions

This section lists interaction information for both brand and generic drug names. If the name you are looking for is not included in the list, click on “All” to look through the list for more general terms, such as “birth control pills”. To search for information on **interactions with birth control pills** click on the letter “B” under the heading “Drug Interactions”.

[Drug Interactions](#)
Learn about the positive and negative ways in which herbs and about natural substances that might interact with it.

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A list of drugs that start with the letter “B” will come up. Scroll down the page to find “Birth Control Pills” and click on the link.



Natural & Alternative Treatments

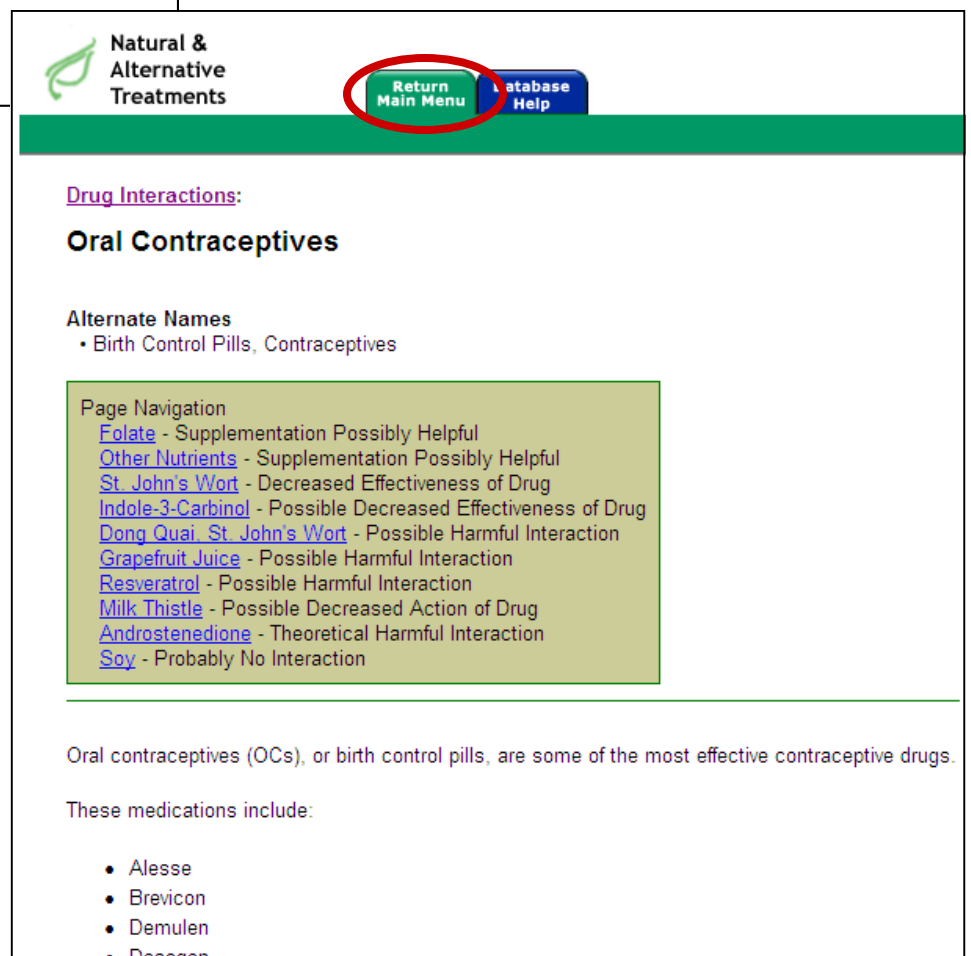
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- [Cefaclor Hydrochloride](#)
- [Biaxin](#)
- [Bile Acid Sequestrant Drugs](#)
- [Bio-Tab](#)
- [Biosaf](#)
- [Birth Control Pills](#)
- [Bisoprolol Fumarate](#)
- [Blocadren](#)
- [Blood Pressure Drugs](#)

The entry on interactions between oral contraceptives and various supplements will come up.

You can scroll down the page, or click on the page navigation links to skip to a specific interaction.

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[Drug Interactions:](#)

Oral Contraceptives

Alternate Names

- Birth Control Pills, Contraceptives

Page Navigation

- [Folate](#) - Supplementation Possibly Helpful
- [Other Nutrients](#) - Supplementation Possibly Helpful
- [St. John's Wort](#) - Decreased Effectiveness of Drug
- [Indole-3-Carbinol](#) - Possible Decreased Effectiveness of Drug
- [Dong Quai, St. John's Wort](#) - Possible Harmful Interaction
- [Grapefruit Juice](#) - Possible Harmful Interaction
- [Resveratrol](#) - Possible Harmful Interaction
- [Milk Thistle](#) - Possible Decreased Action of Drug
- [Androstenedione](#) - Theoretical Harmful Interaction
- [Soy](#) - Probably No Interaction

Oral contraceptives (OCs), or birth control pills, are some of the most effective contraceptive drugs.

These medications include:

- Alesse
- Brevicon
- Demulen
- Desogen

Alternative Therapies

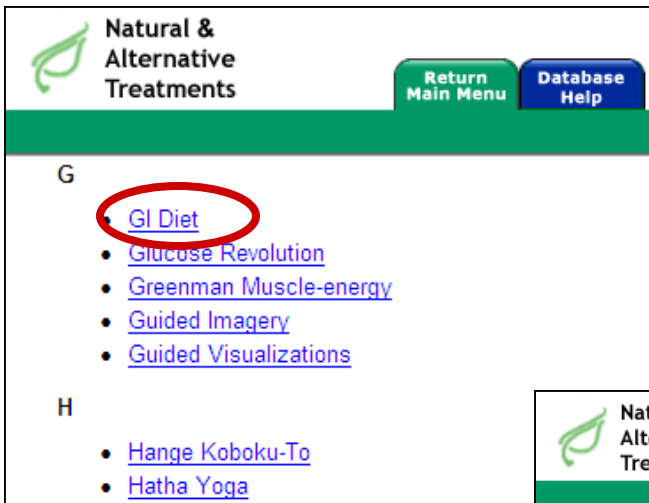
To search for information on the **GI Diet** click on the letter “G” under the heading “Alternative Therapies”.

[Alternative Therapies](#)

Many alternative therapies have made their way into the mainstream alternative therapies to help you make an educated decision on wh

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A list of therapies that start with the letter “G” will come up. Click on the link for GI Diet.



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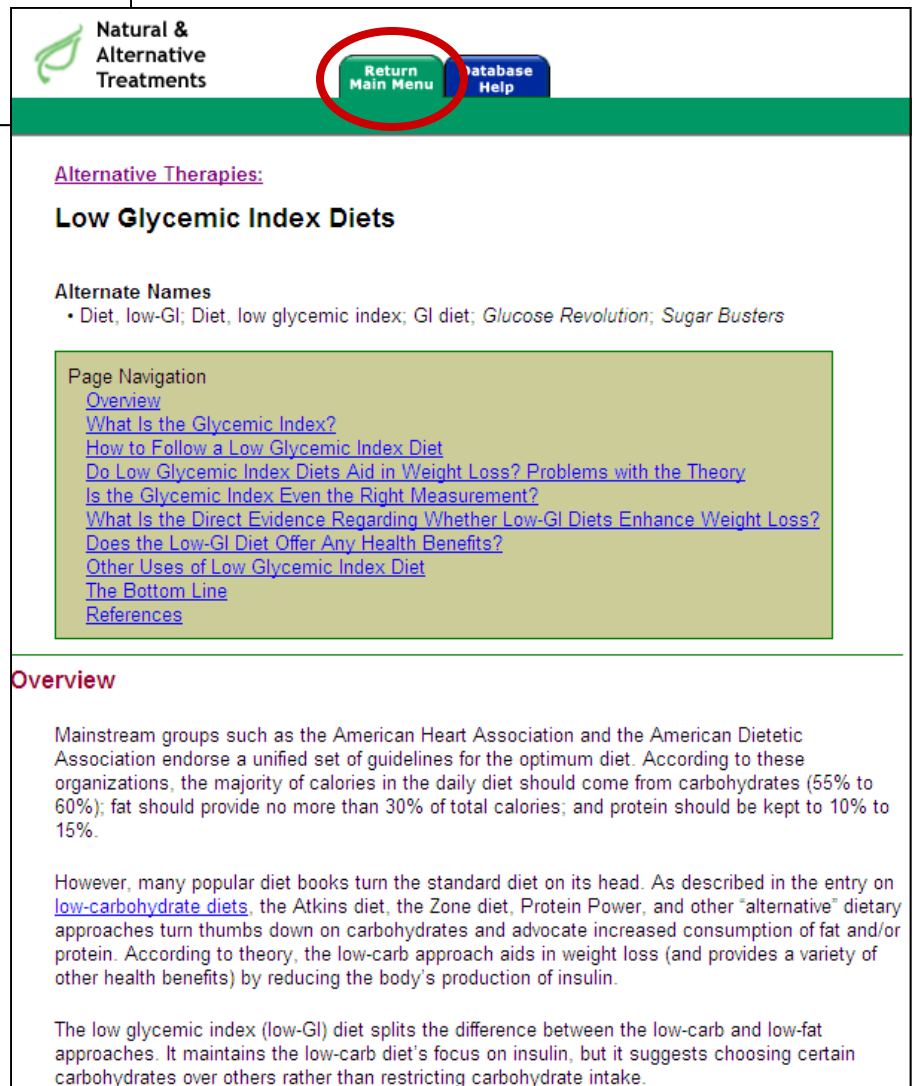
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G

- [GI Diet](#)
- [Glucose Revolution](#)
- [Greenman Muscle-energy](#)
- [Guided Imagery](#)
- [Guided Visualizations](#)

H

- [Hange Koboku-To](#)
- [Hatha Yoga](#)



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Alternative Therapies:

Low Glycemic Index Diets

Alternate Names

- Diet, low-GI; Diet, low glycemic index; GI diet; *Glucose Revolution*; *Sugar Busters*

Page Navigation

- [Overview](#)
- [What Is the Glycemic Index?](#)
- [How to Follow a Low Glycemic Index Diet](#)
- [Do Low Glycemic Index Diets Aid in Weight Loss? Problems with the Theory](#)
- [Is the Glycemic Index Even the Right Measurement?](#)
- [What Is the Direct Evidence Regarding Whether Low-GI Diets Enhance Weight Loss?](#)
- [Does the Low-GI Diet Offer Any Health Benefits?](#)
- [Other Uses of Low Glycemic Index Diet](#)
- [The Bottom Line](#)
- [References](#)

Overview

Mainstream groups such as the American Heart Association and the American Dietetic Association endorse a unified set of guidelines for the optimum diet. According to these organizations, the majority of calories in the daily diet should come from carbohydrates (55% to 60%); fat should provide no more than 30% of total calories; and protein should be kept to 10% to 15%.

However, many popular diet books turn the standard diet on its head. As described in the entry on [low-carbohydrate diets](#), the Atkins diet, the Zone diet, Protein Power, and other “alternative” dietary approaches turn thumbs down on carbohydrates and advocate increased consumption of fat and/or protein. According to theory, the low-carb approach aids in weight loss (and provides a variety of other health benefits) by reducing the body’s production of insulin.

The low glycemic index (low-GI) diet splits the difference between the low-carb and low-fat approaches. It maintains the low-carb diet’s focus on insulin, but it suggests choosing certain carbohydrates over others rather than restricting carbohydrate intake.

The entry on Low Glycemic Index Diets will come up.

You can scroll down the page, or click on the page navigation links to skip to a specific section.

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Functional Foods

To search for information on **Flaxseed** click on the letter “F” under the heading “Functional Foods ”

[Functional Foods](#)
You may have heard the phrase “functional foods,” but what do more of them? Learn about the latest scientific evidence about

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A list of functional foods that start with the letter “F” will come up. Click on the link for Flaxseed.


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F

- [Fish oil](#)
- [Flaxseed](#)
- [Flaxseed Oil](#)
- [Folacin](#)
- [Folate](#)
- [Folic Acid](#)

G

- [Gamma-linolenic Acid](#)
- [Garlic](#)

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[Herbs & Supplements:](#)

Flaxseed

Alternate Names

- Linseed

Principal Proposed Uses

- [Constipation](#); [Heart Disease \(Prevention\)](#); [High Cholesterol](#)

Other Proposed Uses

- [Cancer Prevention](#); [Diverticulitis](#); [Dyspepsia](#); [High Cholesterol](#); [Irritable Bowel Syndrome](#); [Lupus Nephritis](#); [Menopausal Symptoms](#); Skin Inflammation (Topical Use of the Herb)

Page Navigation

- [What Is Flaxseed Used for Today?](#)
- [What Is the Scientific Evidence for Flaxseed?](#)
- [Therapeutic Dosages](#)
- [Safety Issues](#)
- [References](#)

Flaxseeds are the hard, tiny seeds of *Linum usitatissimum*, the flax plant, which has been widely used for thousands of years as a source of food and clothing. So far, scientists have isolated at least three flaxseed components with potential health benefits. The first is fiber, valuable in treating [constipation](#). The benefits of the other two substances, alpha-linolenic acid (a type of [omega-3 fatty acid](#)) and lignans, are not yet fully confirmed; still, preliminary research suggests that these components may be helpful in the prevention of cancer and heart disease and perhaps in treatment of chronic kidney disease and menopausal symptoms.

The oil made from flaxseed has no appreciable amounts of lignans, but it does contain alpha-linolenic acid. See [flaxseed oil](#) and [lignans](#) for more information on these substances.

The entry on Flaxseed will come up.

You can scroll down the page, or click on the page navigation links to skip to a specific section. You can also go to related entries by clicking on the links in the text.

Click on the “Return Main Menu” tab at the top of the page to return to the main page.