

# News in Your School

## TOWNSHIP OF OCEAN

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### In This Issue

- ♥ What are Omega-3 Fatty Acids?

### Recipe:

- ♥ Veggie Flaxseed Burgers

### RD Corner



Hello! My name is Meredith Hesselein and I'm your school Registered Dietitian!

My main goals are to teach students lifelong healthy eating habits and to keep you up to date on food and nutrition news. If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me at:

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## What are Omega-3 Fatty Acids?

Research shows that eating two 4-ounce servings of seafood per week may reduce the risk of heart disease and related deaths. Many health professionals attribute this potentially life-saving quality of seafood to the presence of omega-3 essential fatty acids.

Fish contain two important omega-3 fatty acids: EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid). Limited research has shown that in patients with known heart disease, higher blood levels of DHA and EPA are associated with a reduction in arrhythmias, or irregular heartbeat, and fatal heart disease.

And, omega-3s are not limited to fish and seafood. They are also found in some vegetable oils, nuts, seeds, and soy foods in the form of ALA (alpha-linolenic acid). Although research is limited, higher intakes of ALA have been shown to reduce risk of heart disease in both those with and without heart disease.

### Plant Based Omega-3s

- ♥ Include vegetable oils that contain omega-3 fatty acids, such as flaxseed oil, walnut oil, canola oil, or soybean oil
- ♥ Add hemp hearts or ground flaxseed to cereals, yogurt, and salads. The body isn't able to break down whole flaxseed effectively but grinding them or purchasing ground flaxseed helps with absorption (store ground flaxseed in the refrigerator or freezer to maintain freshness)
- ♥ Substitute ground flaxseed for butter or oil when baking. Use 3 tablespoons of ground flaxseed instead of 1 tablespoon of oil.
- ♥ Snack on edamame or walnuts for a snack rich in omega-3 fatty acids.



Adapted from: eatright.org  
*What are Omega-3 Fatty Acids*  
Reviewed by Sarah Klemm, RD, CD  
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# Let's Get Cooking...

## Veggie Flax Burgers

Serves 4, ready in 20 minutes



### Ingredients:

- ♥ 1 (6 ½ ounce) jar artichoke hearts, drained and quartered
- ♥ 1 teaspoon garlic, chopped
- ♥ ¼ cup green onion, chopped
- ♥ 4 tablespoons fresh parsley (or 2 tsp dried)
- ♥ ¾ cup cooked garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
- ♥ ¾ cup cooked kidney beans, drained and rinsed (or black beans)
- ♥ 3 tablespoons ground flaxseed
- ♥ 2 tablespoons roasted tahini (or other nut butter)
- ♥ ¼ teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
- ♥ ½ cup cooked brown rice (or millet)
- ♥ 4 hamburger buns (or lettuce leaves) \*

### Instructions:

- 1.) Put the artichoke hearts, garlic, green onions, parsley, garbanzo beans, kidney beans, ground flaxseed, tahini, and black pepper in a food processor. Pulse about eight times until blended.
- 2.) Scrape down the sides and pulse another 6 times, but DON'T OVERPROCESS! Move to a bowl and gently stir in cooked rice.
- 3.) Divide mixture into four portions and form into patties about 1/2" thick.
- 4.) Heat a large nonstick frying pan over medium heat and coat with cooking spray or canola oil. Fry the burgers until the bottoms are brown, about 5 minutes. Spray the tops of the burgers with the cooking spray and turn over. Cook until brown, about 5 minutes more.
- 5.) Serve on buns, if desired. Enjoy!

*\*For a low-carb option, swap the bun for lettuce leaves*

