

# THE MEDICAL MESSENGER

BY GILES FAMILY MEDICINE

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## Welcome

Hello patients! Welcome back to the Medical Messenger.

I hope everyone has had a wonderful summer, and is enjoying the monsoon season.

I know many of you are just returning home from vacation, and beginning to fall back into your regular routines, and the kids are getting ready to go back to school.

I hope you enjoy this month's topic. As always, if you have any topic suggestions or questions about anything that is included in this issue, please communicate those with me via email, which is also listed below.

Stay Healthy,

*Dr. Giles*

## Announcements

- Follow the practice on social media (see details below)
- Ben's Bells Volunteer Opportunity this upcoming Saturday 08/04 from 1- 3 PM, contact Krista or Melanie for details

## Highlights

- Fish Oil

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

## Fish Oil

Recently, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality looked at the scientific evidence in relation to omega-3 fatty acid (fish oil) and cardiovascular disease.

The Possible benefits of fish oil was first observed in an Eskimo population in Greenland. Since then there have been hundreds of studies performed to evaluate omega-3 fatty acids and cardiovascular disease.

The Agency looked at 147 published articles and came up with the following conclusions:

- 1) Fish oil supplements slightly lowered total cholesterol and triglycerides. It also slightly elevated HDL (good cholesterol) but also slightly elevated LDL (bad cholesterol).
- 2) No benefit for prevention of major cardiovascular events
- 3) No benefit for all-cause death and sudden cardiac death

- 4) No benefit in patient who have had coronary revascularization (Bypass or Stent) or who have atrial fibrillation
- 5) No effect on systolic or diastolic blood pressure

A few take home points:

The jury is still out on fish oil supplements. Ultimately long-term randomized control trials need to be done to determine if they can influence cardiovascular outcomes.

Some of the best scientific studies were done using fish oil supplements as opposed to eating the actual fish. Observational studies that DID show benefit were done with fish intake as a food source as opposed to supplements. However, observational studies are less scientifically rigorous than RCT's. There appears to be no harm in taking supplements.

My recommendation would be to include fatty fish one to two times per week as part of a healthy Mediterranean diet.

**ADDRESS:**

7395 E. Tanque Verde Rd  
Tucson, AZ 85715

**PHONE:**

(520) 355-2900

**E-MAIL:**

[drgiles@martygilesmd.com](mailto:drgiles@martygilesmd.com)

**Website**

<http://martygilesmd.com/>

**Facebook**

Giles Family Medicine

**Instagram**

@gilesfamilymedicine

