

Glossary: ABCD

www.essentialfats.com

A

Absolute EFA Insufficiency. Insufficient levels of EFAs in the body. The cells do not get enough EFAs because the body does not have enough. The condition is found with fat malabsorption and in people who eat very few calories, such as anorexia nervosa.

Adipose Tissue. The body's fat tissue, which consists of masses of fat storing cells.

Alpha-linolenic Acid. See linolenic acid (18:3w3).

American Dietetic Association (ADA). The professional organization of dieticians in the United States.

Amino Acid (AA). The basic building block of proteins, composed of an amino group, an acid group, a hydrogen atom, and a distinctive side chain attached to a carbon atom.

Anemia. Literally, "too little blood." Any condition in which a reduced number of red blood cells are present. The red blood cells may be immature (and therefore large), or they may be small or contain too little hemoglobin to carry the normal amount of oxygen to the tissues.

Aneurysm. A weakening of the artery wall, due to atherosclerosis, causing a bulge. An aneurysm can rupture. It can lead to thrombosis or embolism.

Angioplasty. Plastic surgery of blood vessels.

Anorexia Nervosa. An eating disorder in which someone starves him/herself and experiences extreme weight loss--at least 15 percent below the individual's normal body weight. One of the most frightening aspects of the disorder is that people with anorexia continue to think they are overweight even when they are bone-thin. Usually begins in young people around the time of puberty.

Antioxidant: Any naturally occurring or manufactured material whose incorporation into a fat provides greater stability in the fat. The antioxidant increases stability by preventing or retarding reaction of the fat with oxygen, thus retarding development of rancidity. Antioxidants for food fats must be non-toxic and edible.

Aorta. A large, elastic artery beginning at the upper part of the left ventricle of the heart that becomes the main trunk of the arterial system.

Apolipoprotein = Apoprotein. A protein that ferries cholesterol through the bloodstream.

Arachidonic acid, AA. A polyunsaturated fatty acid derived from linoleic acid. The precursor to series 2 eicosanoids. Formula 20:4w6.

Artery. A blood vessel conveying oxygenated blood.

Ascorbic Acid. One of the two active forms of vitamin C. Many people refer to vitamin C by this name.

Aspartame. A nutritive sweetener that provides the sweet taste of sugar at a fraction of the calories. It is made up of components found naturally in common foods such as meats, milk, fruits, and vegetables: the amino acids aspartic acid and phenylalanine, and a methyl ester. When digested, the body handles these substances the same way as those in foods we eat daily.

Atherosclerosis. A type of hardening of the arteries in which cholesterol, fat, and other blood components build up on the inner lining of the arteries. The arteries may eventually narrow so that oxygen and nutrients cannot reach important organs.

B

Basal Metabolism. The energy needed to maintain life when a body is at complete rest after a 12-hour fast (to exclude the thermic effect of the previous meal).

Body Composition. The proportions of muscle, bone, fat and other tissue that makes up a person's total body weight.

Body Mass Index (BMI). An obesity measurement that takes both a person's height and weight into account. The mathematical formula equals a person's weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared. ($BMI = \text{kg}/\text{m}^2$). In general, a person age 35 or older is obese if he or she has a BMI of 27 or more. For people age 34 or younger, a BMI of 25 or more indicates obesity. A BMI of more than 30 is usually considered a sign of moderate to severe obesity.

Bulimia nervosa. An eating disorder in which someone consumes large amounts of food, and then rids their bodies of the excess calories by vomiting, abusing laxatives or diuretics, taking enemas, or exercising obsessively. Because many individuals with bulimia "binge and purge" in secret and maintain normal or above normal body weight, they can often successfully hide their problem from others for years. Dieting heavily between episodes of bingeing and purging is also common.

C

Capillary. Smallest extremity of the arterial vessel, where oxygen and nutrients are released from the blood into the cells, and cellular waste is collected.

Calcium. The most abundant mineral in the body, found primarily in the body's bones and teeth.

Calorie. A calorie is the amount of energy that is released as heat when food is metabolized. Scientists determine the number of calories in foods by burning them in a laboratory device called a calorimeter and measuring the amount of heat produced. The calorie is the amount of heat necessary to raise the temperature of one liter of water one degree Celsius. Carbohydrates and protein contain four calories per gram; fat contains nine calories per gram, and alcohol seven calories per gram. Multiply your ideal weight by 15 to determine daily calorie intake if you are moderately active.

Cancer. A disease in which abnormal cells multiply out of control and disrupt the normal functioning of the body's cells or organs.

Carbohydrates. Compounds composed of carbon, oxygen, and hydrogen arranged as monosaccharides or multiples of monosaccharides.

Cardiovascular Disease (CVD). A general term for all diseases of the heart and blood vessels. Caused by atherosclerosis. When the arteries that carry blood to the heart muscle become obstructed, the heart suffers damage known as coronary heart disease (CHD). CVD refers to cardiovascular disease in any part of the body. We can have disease of the heart not due to the heart (coronary) arteries.

Centers of Disease Control (CDC). A branch of the Department of Health and Human Services which is responsible for monitoring food-borne diseases, among other things.

CHO. Abbreviation for carbohydrates.

Cholesterol. A soft, waxy substance. It is made in sufficient quantity by the body for normal body function, including the manufacture of hormones, bile acid, and vitamin D. It is like a fat and helps to maintain the optimal function and fluidity of membranes. In large amounts it forms crystals which harden the arteries.

Chronic Diseases. Degenerative diseases characterized by deterioration of the body organs; also called chronic, non-communicable diseases. Examples include heart disease and diabetes.

Claudication. Attacks of lameness of pain chiefly in the calf muscles, brought on by walking. It is caused by a lack of oxygen reaching the muscle.

Collaterals. Alternate pathways for arterial blood.

Crohn's disease. An inflammation that extends into the deeper layers of the intestinal wall. Usually involves the small intestine, most often the lower part (the ileum). May affect the large intestine, mouth, esophagus, stomach, duodenum, appendix, or anus. This is a chronic condition that may recur at various times over a lifetime; some people have long periods of remission, sometimes for years, when they are free of symptoms. There is no way to predict when a remission may occur or when symptoms will return. The disease's most common symptoms are abdominal pain, often in the lower right area, and diarrhea. There also may be rectal bleeding, weight loss, and fever. Bleeding may be serious and persistent, leading to anemia (low red blood cell count). Children may suffer delayed development and stunted growth.

D

Daily Reference Values (DRV). A set of standards for nutrients and food components (such as fat and fiber) that have important relationships with health; used on food labels as part of the Daily Values.

Derivatives. Fatty acids derived from another fatty acid. Usually used to refer to derivatives of the two essential fatty acids.

Diabetes Mellitus. A metabolic disorder characterized by altered glucose regulation and utilization, usually caused by insufficient or relatively ineffective insulin.

Type I diabetes, also known as IDDM (insulin dependent diabetes mellitus): The classic form of the disease, usually appearing before late adolescence, and often fatal. The patient produces insufficient insulin.

Type II diabetes, also known as NIDDM (non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus): Adult-onset diabetes, not necessarily treated with insulin. The body produces enough insulin but is resistant to its beneficial roles, such as the transport of glucose and the synthesis of proteins.

Digestion. The process by which food is broken down into absorbable units.

Di- Homo Gamma Linolenic Acid, DGLA, 20:3w6, an w6 derivative derived from 18:3w6. Precursor of series 1 eicosanoids. Also called Homo Gamma Linolenic Acid.

Dyslipidemia: Refers to lipid disorders, such as high cholesterol, high TG, or low HDL. Imbalance in the lipid profile of the blood, usually an excess of low-density lipid cholesterols but sometimes an insufficiency of high-density lipid cholesterols, or both at once.

Diverticulosis. A condition in which little sacs (diverticula) develop in the wall of the colon. In the United States, the majority of people over the age of 60 years have diverticulosis. Most people do not have symptoms and would not know that they had diverticula unless an x-ray or intestinal examination was done. Only about 20 percent of patients with diverticulosis develop complications such as diverticulitis, bleeding, or perforation.

Docosahexaenoic Acid, DHA. A PUFA derived from linolenic acid. Formula 22:6w3. Found in fish, fish oils, mother's milk.



[ABCD](#) | [EFGH](#) | [IJKL](#) | [MNOP](#) | [QRSTU](#) | [VWXYZ](#)

All information on this website is copyrighted; see [use and permission to reproduce](#). The information in this website is not medical advice, merely a general scientific discussion. See [warnings and disclaimers](#).

[Home](#) | [EFA Lab](#) | [EFA Books](#) | [Foods&Supplements](#)

© 1999 Edward N. Siguel. All rights reserved

modified 3/1/99