

# THE BUZZ ABOUT.....



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BEE WELL NUTRITION

## The Benefits Of DHA For Kids

**Bee Well  
Nutrition  
Liat Golan RD,  
LDN  
Nutrition &  
Weight Loss  
Specialist**

As parents are shopping with their kids to get ready for the new school year, there are some things that are even more important to consider than new jeans, shoes, notebooks and backpacks – healthy foods and nutrients like DHA to support brain health, keeping children healthy, focused and happy, and ultimately setting them up for success in the classroom.

Studies have shown that DHA may play an important role in brain development and reducing cognitive decline. DHA may also play a role in managing behavior and mood.

DHA stands for "docosahexaenoic acid." It is an omega 3 fatty acid and is considered a beneficial fat. DHA is critical for the optimal development and function of the brain, eyes, and central nervous system during infancy and childhood. The brain grows rapidly throughout the first years of life, and DHA usage by the brain is significant during this time. Because DHA makes up a large portion of the brain and the retinas of the eyes, a deficiency could negatively impact the development or function of these organs. Studies revealed that babies with higher DHA levels have better mental and visual function. In addition, children who were breastfed tend to have higher IQ scores and better academic performance than those who were formula-fed; this is believed to be partly related to the high DHA content of breast milk.



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### How Much DHA is Adequate for a Child?

Although there are no official intake recommendations for DHA in children, most experts recommend at least 100 to 150 milligrams of DHA for kids per day, actual intakes appear to be closer to 20 to 50 milligrams per day only. A 3 oz serving of [salmon](#) provides about 600 mg of DHA.

### What are Good Sources of DHA?

- Breast milk
  - Organ meats
  - Seafood, especially oily, cold-water fish such as salmon, herring, sardines, and anchovies
  - Flax seeds
  - Walnuts
- However, young children must limit their intake of fish due to [mercury contamination](#). Children under six years old may eat half of a can (3 oz) of chunk light tuna per week.

### References:

1. Eat right .org
2. Health castle .com