

Flaxseeds, eaten from a good source and in moderation are a great source of omega-3 fatty acids, hugely beneficial for hormonal balance and (particularly in relation to estrogen detoxification), and a great addition to your diet for myriad reasons.

Flaxseeds can be purchased whole, pre-ground, or as an oil.

Flaxseeds are rich in alpha linolenic acid (ALA). This is an omega-3 fat that is a precursor to the form of omega-3 found in fish oils called eicosapentaenoic acid or EPA.

- Flaxseed oil provides a higher concentration of the ALA than the seeds.
- The seeds provide a host of other nutrients that are lost in the oil, including manganese, magnesium, and especially fiber! (It's the seeds that we want for our detox, not the oil.)

Health benefits of consuming flax:

- anti-inflammatory properties
- bone protection and health
- cancer prevention—particularly breast cancer
- reduction in formation of blood clots leading to heart disease
- increased insulin response, beneficial for diabetics
- blood-pressure regulator
- cholesterol regulator
- hot flash reduction
- anti-estrogenic (helping to detox excess circulating estrogens and have an anti-estrogenic effect on estrogen receptors)

Buying and storing flax

- Whole flaxseeds will last longer than pre-ground flax.
- If buying in bulk, be sure the store has a good turn-over rate and the seeds are not sitting too long to ensure freshness.
- Whole flax should be stored in an airtight glass container in your refrigerator or freezer.
- Grind small amounts in a coffee-type grinder and store in a separate airtight container in your refrigerator or freezer.
- Ground flaxseeds are more prone to oxidation. Purchase in vacuum sealed or refrigerated bags and store in an airtight glass container in your freezer.
- Flaxseed oil is especially perishable and should be purchased in opaque bottles that have been kept refrigerated.
- Flaxseed oil should have a sweet nutty flavor.
- Never use flaxseed oil in cooking; if using add it to foods after they have been heated.

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Quick and easy ways to boost your flax intake:

- Sprinkle ground flax on hot or cold cereal.
- Add ground flax to smoothies.
- Add ground flaxseeds to your homemade energy bars

RECIPE: FLAXIE MAXIE

This low-glycemic version of my Flax Max Bars was created by one of my clients who's been experimenting with her Fat, Fiber & Protein snacks to maintain her blood sugar (. . . to balance her hormones), for some time. Thanks EI!

ingredients

- 1½ cups almonds (soaked and toasted in the oven is ideal)
- ½ cup walnuts
- ½ cup cacao butter or coconut oil or a mixture of the two
- ½ cup crunchy almond butter
- ½ cup goji berries
- ¼ cup shredded coconut
- ¼ cup fresh ground flax
- a little vanilla extract
- a couple pinches of salt
- handful of cacao nibs
- 6 drops liquid stevia (add the stevia, mix and taste to bring it to your liking)

preparation

1. Pulse nuts, ground flaxseeds, coconut, nut butter and salt in a food processor until coarsely ground.
2. Gently melt the coconut oil or cacao butter by placing the glass jar into warm water to soften enough to scoop or pour and measure.
3. Add coconut oil or cacao butter (or desired mixture) to food processor along with remaining ingredients.
4. Pulse to create a coarse and pasty mixture.
5. Press mixture into an 8 x 8 glass baking dish
6. Chill in refrigerator for 1 hour, until mixture hardens. Cut into bars and store in refrigerator.

Note from chef: *I have used cashews, sunflower seeds, sunflower seed butter. All are yummy. I like using the cacao butter instead of coconut oil because of the flavor and it doesn't melt when traveling.*

Note from Andrea: *The cacao butter will also help maintain your blood sugar balance for a longer period of time.*

RECIPE ADAPTED FROM FLAX MAX BAR RECIPE BY ANDREA NAKAYAMA

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