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As We SEE IT

Fish Oil Now Available By Prescription!

By William Faloon

For decades, the pharmaceutical industry has sought to limit competition by trying to get the FDA to regulate high-potency supplements as drugs. It was only because of intense consumer backlash that Congress passed legislation that protected the free sale of most supplements in the United States.

For those who have battled to protect health freedom, the introduction of an overpriced prescription fish oil drug provides absolute proof that every letter to Congress was well worth sending. I am enormously gratified that Americans were perceptive enough to not let the drug industry (and federal government) trample our liberties under the guise of “protecting” us against “unproven” products.



by William Faloon

PRESCRIPTION FISH OIL

The scientific evidence documenting the effects of fish oil in the body is overwhelming.¹⁻³ One of the substantiated benefits of fish oil supplementation is lowering elevated triglycerides in the blood.⁴⁻⁶



An enterprising company used the scientific findings about fish oil and conducted a study on humans with extremely high triglycerides (over 500 mg/dL).⁷ As would be expected, compared to placebo, the triglyceride levels of the patients who received the fish oil were reduced by 51.6%. This company then applied to the FDA to have its fish oil approved as a new drug. The FDA granted the approval based on the company-sponsored clinical study showing that fish oil does exactly what it had previously been shown to do—that is, lower triglyceride levels.

With prescription drug status, this company is now free to make specific health claims about fish oil and aggressively sell it through cardiologists. If this company's marketing efforts are successful, it stands to earn an enormous amount of money from unwitting patients who do not realize that they can obtain fish oil supplements for a fraction of the price of this prescription fish oil drug.

WOULD YOU EVER BUY YOUR FISH OIL BY PRESCRIPTION?

When we saw the marketing materials for this new prescription fish oil product, we knew it would be more expensive than what dietary supplement companies charge. We almost fell off our chairs, however, when we called the largest pharmacy in the United States to find out the actual price.

A bottle containing 180 1000-milligram capsules costs a whopping \$236.89! That is about nine times more expensive than what this amount of fish oil sells for in a health food store.

The company selling this prescription fish oil drug knew that some consumers might question why they should pay such a high price. In their marketing materials, the company tries to differentiate their fish oil drug from what is available in health food stores by stating the following:

“The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved nonprescription, dietary supplement omega-3s for the treatment of any specific disease or medical condition, like very high triglyceride levels. Dietary supplement omega-3, or so-called fish oil, is not a substitute for prescription (fish oil) because they are not bioequivalent.”⁸



Those who feel more comfortable using FDA-approved products can choose to pay the outlandish price of \$236.89 for each bottle of this prescription-only fish oil drug. Even people with health insurance may find that their co-pay for this fish oil drug is still higher than what they could freely pay for fish oil supplements at a health food store. That is to say nothing of how much health insurance premiums could increase if too many patients are deceived into using this overpriced fish oil drug.

GREATER CONCENTRATION OF EPA/DHA IN PRESCRIPTION FISH OIL

To be objective, I want to point out that this expensive fish oil drug provides more EPA and DHA in each capsule than do most fish oil products sold by supplement companies. What this means is that five or six ordinary fish oil capsules might be needed to get the same amount of EPA/DHA contained in four capsules of this prescription-only version.

Despite the greater concentration of EPA/DHA in the fish oil drug, on a cost-per-milligram basis, the price for the prescription fish oil is still 797% higher than what Life Extension members pay for a fish oil concentrate that also provides sesame lignans and olive fruit extract. The addition of sesame lignans has been shown to increase the effectiveness of fish oil,⁹⁻¹⁴ while olive oil/olive fruit extract has shown additional cardiovascular and antioxidant benefits.¹⁵⁻³⁰

WHAT OTHER NEW PRESCRIPTION FISH OIL DRUGS MIGHT THE FDA APPROVE?

As you will read in this issue of Life Extension magazine, fish oil has been shown to prevent or alleviate a wide variety of ailments, including depression,³¹⁻⁴¹ osteoporosis,⁴²⁻⁴⁵ arthritis,⁴⁶⁻⁵⁰ stroke,⁵¹⁻⁵³ heart attack,⁵⁴⁻⁶⁶ Alzheimer's disease,⁶⁷⁻⁷⁶ and some forms of cancer.⁷⁷⁻⁸³

Might there be future prescription fish oil products approved by the FDA as anti-depressant drugs, as bone-protecting prescription drugs, as anti-arthritis prescription drugs, and even as cancer-preventive prescription drugs?

If so, some drug companies stand to make a lot of money. Elderly patients who are unaware of lower-cost fish oil supplements might have to do without some basic necessities in order to afford their fish oil prescriptions. This is unfortunate, as these high-priced fish oil drugs provide the same omega-3 fatty acids that health-conscious Americans have been supplementing with for the past 35 years.

HOW WE PROTECT YOUR POCKETBOOK AND YOUR HEALTH

Members pay \$75 a year to support the Life Extension Foundation. While we are best known for our forward-thinking scientific research, we have also been on the front lines protecting individual health freedom rights.

It is only because of organizations like the Life Extension Foundation that Americans have a choice between purchasing fish oil as a prescription drug or as a dietary supplement. If the drug industry had its way, fish oil would be available only by prescription. This would be bad news for consumers who would have to pay extortionary prices for fish oil they might need to help relieve inflammatory pain, alleviate mental depression, and possibly sustain their very lives.

For longer life,

Handwritten signature of William Faloon in black ink.

William Faloon

P.S. Life Extension members will be pleased to learn in this issue that even more synergistic ingredients have been added to a popular fish oil supplement now called Super Omega-3 with Sesame Lignans and Olive Fruit Extract.

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