

The Top 12 Preventable Causes of Death

By Robert Ferguson

When you think about preventable causes of death, the obvious ones come to mind—smoking, lack of exercise, or high blood pressure. But there's another risk most people never see coming: **low omega-3 fatty acids**.

Over the last five years, many of my childhood friends died suddenly. Each loss was linked to problems that happen when your **omega-6 to omega-3 ratio is out of balance**. If you're not aware, being out of balance is tied to **blood clots, stroke, and heart attack**.

Case in point: one of my clients, **Jacqueline**, was a **67-year-old Black woman** who played tennis regularly. I encouraged her to get tested. Her **omega-6 to omega-3 ratio was 27.1**, which is unbalanced. She said she would start my plan "eventually." About six months later, I logged onto Facebook and saw, "RIP Jacqueline." She had gone to bed as usual, developed a blood clot, and suffered a heart attack. She is no longer with us. There isn't a week that goes by that I don't think about her, and about my friends who died too soon.

No one can predict the future. But **wisdom and science can lower your risk** of dying early. This is why I urge everyone to **get tested** and work to **improve the omega-6-to-omega-3 ratio**. You can **email me at robert@dietfreelife.com** for details on the at-home test, or **[schedule a free consultation](#)**, and I'll guide you through it.

Nearly **100 percent** of people in the United States, Canada, and Mexico have **insufficient omega-3 levels**, as confirmed by scientifically validated **dried blood spot (DBS) testing**. The good news is that this is **fixable**.

This is where **BalanceOil+** comes in. Unlike most supplements, BalanceOil+ combines omega-3 fatty acids with protective polyphenols, ensuring the omega-3s are absorbed effectively into your cells where they can reduce inflammation, support heart and brain function, and help balance your body from within.

To truly know if your body is in balance, the **BalanceTest** is the place to start. This simple, at-home dried blood spot test measures your **omega-6 to omega-3 ratio** - the **Omega-3 Index** - and the **Arachidonic Acid (AA) to EPA ratio**, two of the most accurate markers of inflammation and cellular health. The BalanceTest gives you a clear picture of what's happening inside your body so you can make informed choices and track your improvements over time. Getting tested isn't just smart, it's empowering.

It's one thing to be aware of a risk factor, like smoking or high blood pressure, but it's another to live with a **silent risk factor** that's quietly fueling inflammation and disease without obvious symptoms. Everyone benefits from getting tested and improving their omega-6-to-omega-3 ratio.

The Top 12 Preventable Causes of Death (Harvard, 2009)

Here are the top 12 modifiable dietary, lifestyle, and metabolic risk factors from the 2009 Harvard study, *The Preventable Causes of Death in the United States: Comparative Risk Assessment of Dietary, Lifestyle, and Metabolic Risk Factors* by Danaei et al., ranked by estimated annual U.S. deaths in 2005:

Rank	Risk Factor	Approx. Annual Deaths*	Primary Sources
1	Tobacco smoking	~ 467,000	PubMed, Harvard Gazette
2	High blood pressure (hypertension)	~ 395,000	PubMed
3	Overweight / obesity	~ 216,000	DanMurphyDC.com
4	Physical inactivity	~ 191,000	PubMed
5	High blood glucose	~ 190,000	Harvard Gazette
6	High LDL-cholesterol	~ 113,000	Harvard Gazette
7	High dietary salt intake	~ 102,000	PubMed
8	Low dietary omega-3 fatty acids	~ 84,000	PubMed
9	High dietary trans fatty acids	~ 82,000	PubMed
10	Alcohol use (net adverse effect)	~ 64,000	PubMed
11	Low intake of fruits & vegetables	~ 58,000	Harvard Gazette
12	Low dietary polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFA)	~ 15,000	Harvard Gazette

*Estimates are approximate and derived from the study's comparative risk assessment for the U.S. in 2005.

Why Omega-3s Matter More Than You Think

Unlike smoking or alcohol, omega-3 deficiency doesn't cause immediate symptoms. You won't feel short of breath or dizzy overnight. Instead, low omega-3 levels create **inflammation at the cellular level**, damaging blood vessels, disrupting metabolism, and increasing risk for heart disease, stroke, dementia, and more.

Research from Harvard's *T.H. Chan School of Public Health* found that **inadequate omega-3 intake causes roughly 84,000 preventable deaths every year in the U.S.** That makes it one of the top 10 modifiable risk factors for early death, higher than many people realize.

What's even more eye-opening is that **high trans-fat intake**, another major cause of inflammation, ranked right behind omega-3 deficiency at #9. Together, these two diet-related factors represent the deadly combination of eating too many bad fats and not enough good ones.

Thankfully, as of **2018**, trans fats have been **removed from the U.S. food supply** after decades of research and legal pressure led by scientists like **Dr. Fred Kummerow**, who sued the FDA to ban them. This change has saved countless lives and marked one of the greatest public-health victories of our time. However, while trans fats are now gone, the other half of this deadly equation - **low**

omega-3 intake - has yet to be addressed. Millions of people remain dangerously out of balance, and most have no idea.

The Silent Epidemic of Omega-3 Deficiency

Most Americans today live with an omega-6 to omega-3 ratio of **20:1 or higher**, when the ideal range is closer to **3:1 or below**. This imbalance is one of the main drivers of **low-grade, chronic inflammation**, the same inflammation linked to heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and even mood disorders.

Testing your omega-6 to omega-3 ratio gives you a clear picture of how your cells are functioning. With this information, you can take action to restore balance using real food, proper supplementation, and test-based guidance.

BalanceOil+ helps correct this imbalance by combining **high-quality omega-3s from fish oil with polyphenols from unripe olives**. These polyphenols protect omega-3s from oxidation, improve stability, and act as “chaperones,” helping them enter cell membranes where they have the greatest impact.

A Preventable Risk Factor You Can Fix

The takeaway is simple: while you can't control everything in life, **you can control this**. You can't undo decades of smoking or instantly cure hypertension, but you can **measure, balance, and improve your omega-6 to omega-3 ratio** starting today.

It's a small change with a massive ripple effect, lowering inflammation, improving cardiovascular function, stabilizing metabolism, and helping protect against many of the top causes of death listed above.

If you haven't yet tested your omega balance, now is the time. You deserve to know your numbers and take the next step toward protecting your long-term health.

Final Thoughts

Most people never think of omega-3s as lifesaving, but this research proves otherwise. Being low in omega-3s isn't just a nutrition problem; it's one of the **leading preventable causes of death** in the United States.

Start by getting tested, learn your numbers, and taking steps to bring your body back into balance. With **BalanceOil+** and a science-based plan, you can help reduce inflammation, improve health from the inside out, and live a longer, stronger life.

If you're ready to take control of your health, **don't wait. The first step is simple.**

👉 **Email me at robert@dietfreelife.com, contact the person who shared this article with you, or [schedule a free consultation](#)**, and I'll explain your options for getting tested and improving your omega-6 to omega-3 balance.

References

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About The Author

Robert Ferguson is a California- and Florida-based single father of two daughters, clinical nutritionist, Omega Balancing Coach™, researcher, best-selling author, speaker, podcast and television host, health advisor, NAACP Image Award Nominee, creator of the Diet Free Life methodology, and Chief Nutrition Officer for iCoura Health. He also serves on the Presidential Task Force on Obesity for the National Medical Association and the Health and Product Advisory Board for Zinzino, Inc.