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## Mice Make Fish Oils For Healthy Hearts

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A worm gene engineered into mice enables them to produce omega-3 oils, compounds known to help prevent heart disease in humans. The discovery, if transferred to livestock animals, could pave the way for healthier eggs, milk and meat.

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Mice expressing the fat-1 gene from the nematode *Caenorhabditis elegans* can convert omega-6 fatty acids into the healthier omega-3 version, report Jing Kang and colleagues in a Brief Communication in the 05 February 2004 issue of [Nature](#) (Vol. 427, No. 6974). Mammals cannot ordinarily perform this feat.

Nutritionists recommend a diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which are normally obtained from fish. Farm animals are currently fed fishmeal to ensure that they also contain these compounds. But this is expensive, the authors say - engineering the animals to produce omega-3 fatty acids themselves could offer an alternative route to heart-friendly food.

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*Message posted by: Trevor M. D'Souza*