THE

AMAZING

OLIVE OIL

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IMPORTANT

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Introduction

Olive oil is rich in monounsaturated fat and antioxidants like chlorophyll, carotenoids and vitamin E. Studies have identified a compound in olive oil called "oleuropein" which prevents the LDL (bad) cholesterol from oxidizing - It is the oxidized cholesterol that sticks to the walls of the arteries and forms plaque. Moreover, replacing other fats in your diet with olive oil can significantly lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart attack.

According to the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), consuming about 23 grams of olive oil a day may reduce the risk of heart disease. Oleocanthal from olive oil is a non-selective inhibitor of cyclooxygenase (COX) similar to classical NSAIDs (non- steroidal anti-inflammatory drug) like ibuprofen. Consequently olive oil can reduce inflammation associated with arthritis, etc.

It has been suggested that long-term consumption of small quantities of oleocanthal from olive oil may be responsible in part for the low incidence of heart disease associated with a Mediterranean diet.

All types of olive oil provide monounsaturated fat, but "extra-virgin" or "virgin" olive oils are the least processed forms. As a result, they contain the highest levels of polyphenols, a powerful antioxidant.

Olive oil is unlikely to cause allergic reactions, and as such is used in preparations for lipophilic (the ability of a chemical compound to dissolve in fats, oils, lipids, and non-polar solvents) drug ingredients. It does have demulcent (an agent that forms a soothing film over a mucous membrane, relieving minor pain and inflammation of the membrane) properties, and mild laxative properties, acting as a stool softener.

Olive Oil is also used, at room temperature, as an ear wax softener.

Olive oil is also a potent blocker of intestinal contractions, and can be used to treat excessive Borborygmus (also known as stomach growling, or rumbling**,** is the rumbling sound produced by the movement of gas through the intestines).

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Cancer Inhibitor

A study published in the *Annals of Oncology*, January 2005, has identified oleic acid, a monounsaturated fatty acid found in olive oil, as having the ability to reduce the affect of an oncogene (a gene that cause a host cell to turn into a cancer cell). This particular oncogene is associated with the rapid growth of breast cancer tumours. The conclusion of the study was that oleic acid, when combined with drug therapy encouraged the self-destruction of aggressive, treatment-resistant cancer cells thus destroying the cancer.

Olive oil has also been positively indicated in studies on prostate and endometrial cancers as well.

Unlike other fats, which are associated with a higher risk of colon cancer, olive oil helps protect the colon cells from damaging carcinogens. A study published in Food Chemistry Toxicology, November 2003, suggests that the antioxidants in olive oil reduce the amount of carcinogens formed when meat is cooked.

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Helps to Lose Body Weight and Fat Mass

A study conducted on eight over-weight men published in the *British Journal of Nutrition*, September 2003, indicated that a significant loss of body weight and fat mass can be achieved without increasing physical activity and making only one change in eating habits - the substitution of olive oil for saturated fats. An individual can get the most benefit by substituting olive oil for saturated fats rather than just adding more olive oil to their diet.

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Anti-Inflammatory Properties

The body uses the healthy fats in olive oil to produce natural anti-inflammatory agents. These anti-inflammatory agents can help reduce the severity of both arthritis and asthma. Un-inflamed cell membranes are more fluid and are better able to move healthy nutrients into the cells and move waste products out of them.

A lower incidence of osteoporosis and dementia is found in geographical areas where individuals consume large quantities of olive oil.

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Blood Sugar Controller

Diabetics, or those at risk for diabetes, are advised to combine a low-fat, high-carbohydrate diet with olive oil. Studies show this combination is very effective at controlling blood sugar levels compared to diets that consist entirely of low-fat meals. Adding olive oil is also linked to lower triglyceride levels - many diabetics live with high triglyceride levels which put them at risk for heart disease.

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Olive Oil and Rheumatoid Arthritis

A study in Greece showed that individuals who had the lowest lifetime consumption of extra virgin olive oil had two and a half times greater probability of developing rheumatoid arthritis than those with

the highest lifetime consumption. A rheumatologist of the *Arthritis Foundation*, which did the study, said that adding olive oil to your diet could help you protect yourself against rheumatoid arthritis. And since the type of oil consumed in Greece is extra virgin olive oil, that type offers additional protection.

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Olive Oil and Antioxidants

Among the major components of extra virgin olive oil are antioxidants.

Olive oil provides beta carotene (pro-vitamin A) and tocopherol (vitamin E) which are excellent buffers of acids produced in the gastrointestinal tract and those resulting from body metabolism.

Extra virgin olive oil contains 88% of its vitamin E in the form of alpha-tocopherol, which is easily synthesised by the body. These are very important antioxidants that prevent the oxidation of LDLs (bad cholesterol). Such oxidation can cause damage to ordinary cells, nerve cells, and arteries and lead to arteriosclerosis, coronary heart disease, or even cancer.

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Olive Oil and Aging

Medical studies have indicated that diets which are deficient in vitamin E accelerate the breakdown of certain fatty acids, a process which leads to aging.

The vitamin E content in olive oil is thought to provide a defence against such effects, and consequently help maintain mental faculties and muscular control longer and better. Among other benefits, the vitamin A content in olive oil helps prevent and minimise the development of skin wrinkles.

As an individual ages, their digestive capacity becomes reduced, which results in more difficulty to absorb nutrients from food, especially vitamins and minerals. Olive oil is very digestible and its nutrients are easier to digest, and it also has beneficent effects in aiding digestion and stimulating the appetite.

Another problem associated with aging is bone calcification, and this can be rectified by olive oil consumption. Studies have shown that a diet containing enough oleates as well as a moderate supply of essential fatty acids is needed for healthy bone mineralisation - a process that aids the developing bones in children and prevents calcium loss in adults.

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Olive Oil, Good for Every Function in the Body

Olive oil is replete with many healthful nutrients such as vitamins A, E, D and K. Other nutrients found in olive oil include:

- Magnesium-rich chlorophyll - this encourages formation of healthy red blood cells.
- Squalene - this is a precursor to phytoesterols, which help reduce acidity.
- Phytoesterols (in the form of beta-sitosterol) - this assists in preventing cholesterol absorption.
- Caffeic and gallic nutrients - these stimulate the flow of bile which helps alkalise food coming out of the stomach, thus reducing stress on the pancreas.
- Phenolic compounds - these protect against fermentation of fats and cholesterol, and may promote higher production of fat-digesting enzymes in the pancreas.
- Cycloartenol - this lowers the amount of cholesterol in free circulation and increases excretion of bile to mop up excess acidity and increase alkalinity of the food coming out of the stomach.

Olive Oil has been shown to have beneficial effects on virtually every aspect of body function, development and maintenance, including brain development, bone structure, digestion, aging process, the condition of skin, hair, metabolism, and on plaque formation in the blood vessels.

These health benefits can be derived from all forms of olive oil; however, refined oils undergo a lot of high temperatures during processing which destroys or alters the antioxidants, and thus may have very little, if any, vitamins left. In order to gain the maximum medicinal benefit, only Extra Virgin olive oil should be used.

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Appendix - Effect of Dietary Fats on Cholesterol Levels

Effect of Dietary Fats on Cholesterol Levels			
Fat	**Sources**	**State at Room Temperature**	**Effect on Cholesterol Levels** (HDL - Good) (LDL - Bad)
Monounsaturated	Olives; olive oil, canola oil, peanut oil; cashews, almonds, peanuts, and most other nuts; avocados	Liquid	Lowers LDL; Raises HDL
Polyunsaturated	Corn, soybean, safflower, and cottonseed oils; fish	Liquid	Lowers both LDL and HDL
Saturated	Whole milk, butter, cheese, and ice cream; red meat; chocolate; coconut milk, and coconut oil	Solid	Raises both LDL and HDL
Trans	Most margarines; vegetable shortening (USA); partially hydrogenated vegetable oil; deep-fried chips; many fast foods; most commercial baked goods	Solid or Semi-solid	Raises LDL; Lowers HDL

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