

Title:

A Delicious Companion To Good Health: The Olive Oil Story

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622

Summary:

The health benefits of olive oil in the Mediterranean diet has become more than a novel observation. Clinical research is substantiating healthy benefits, but the gourmet tastes and flavors are bonuses well worth mentioning too.

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Keywords:

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Article Body:

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Highly favored as a cooking oil, or for use in a variety of classic dressings, olive oil is being touted in some quarters as a delicious companion to good health. Research on the health benefits of olive oil is impressive, so is the affects of the Mediterranean diet.

Recent Findings**Olive Oil as a Cholesterol Reducer**

Compared to American cuisine, especially the snack and fast foods prevalent in the US, the Mediterranean Diet has intrigued the medical world. The European Journal of Clinical Nutrition has published findings that indicate the

introduction of olive oil into our regular diet has demonstrated a reduction in LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol). This is significant because once LDL cholesterol has oxidized it often results in artery rigidity and accompanying heart disease.

Olive Oil in Cancer Prevention

In a comparison study at the University Hospital Germans Trias Pujol in Barcelona there seems to be an indication that the health benefits of olive oil may also be useful in the prevention or slowing of cancer cells. In the study, lab rats were introduced to a carcinogen that resulted in cancerous tumors. The study provides evidence that a diet similar to the Mediterranean diet, rich in olive oil prevents colonic carcinogenesis reducing precancerous tissue which resulted in fewer tumors when compared to a controlled sample of rats ingesting foods containing other types of cooking oils.

Researchers at Oxford University in England have seen indications that olive oil may actually be as good for our digestive system as fresh fruit and vegetables in preventing or reducing the incidence of colon cancer. While red meat seems to be linked to the development of colon cancer, fish and olive oil seemed to reduce the incidence of colon cancer. The reasons behind this phenomena are still being considered, but it is believed that the olive oil may help regulate the bile acid in the stomach while increasing useful enzymes within the stomach that contribute to optimal colon health.

Olive Oil and Heart Health

The American Heart Association has also noted that consumption of olive oil has "clear health benefits".

Olive Oil and Lower Blood Pressure

By substituting virgin olive oil for other fats within your diet, the Archives of Internal Medicine indicates a substantial reduction in drug dosage requirements for the management of high blood pressure. Initial findings indicate dosage reductions could be as high as 50%.

Additional Findings

By lowering the level of LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol) there is an increase of the HDL cholesterol (good cholesterol). The antioxidant effects of olive oil have also been widely reported and are effective in reducing free radicals within the body that may prove to be a causal agent in pre cancerous and

cancerous growth.

Additional health benefits of olive oil may be found in a Mediterranean diet which explores the varied uses of olive oil in both food preparation as well as additional balanced meal choices. Combined, olive oil and appropriate food choice seem to enhance the overall health of those subscribing to the Mediterranean diet.

Final Word

While studies remain ongoing, it is encouraging to note that something that has long been noted for good taste may also be a link to positive health benefits and longevity of life. An adaptation of the Mediterranean diet may be a healthy, yet palatable change well worth considering.