

## **HEALTH BENEFITS OF EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL**

Olive oil, according to a recent *Oxford University* study, contains essential fatty acids similar to that found in human milk. It is highly recommended for the elderly as it aids in the assimilation of minerals and vitamins. It stimulates bone mineralization, thus preventing calcium loss.

Results of a study of people living in southern Greece suggest that eating hearty amounts of olive oil and cooked vegetables may reduce the risk of developing rheumatoid arthritis.

One tablespoon of extra virgin olive oil provides eight percent of the recommended daily allowance of vitamin E, a natural antioxidant.

An olive oil rich diet may also help to prevent or delay the onset of diabetes by preventing insulin resistance and ensuring better blood sugar level control.

Polyunsaturated and mono-unsaturated fats can lower blood cholesterol levels, which in turn can prevent arteriosclerosis.

According to a new study published in the November 2005 issue of the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, phenolic compounds found in olive oil may help explain the cardiovascular health benefits associated with the Mediterranean Diet.

Phenolics are plant-based compounds believed to have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anticlotting properties that are found in higher concentrations of extra virgin olive oil.

In this study researchers found an improvement in the functioning of the thin lining of small blood vessels, and in the concentrations of certain components of blood serum, after study subjects consumed a polyphenol-rich meal.

Although more studies are needed to confirm these results these findings may help to explain some of the heart health benefits associated with the Mediterranean diet.

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**From the American Medical Society:**

**Good fats include mono-unsaturated fats and poly-unsaturated fats and are essential for health.** Mono-unsaturated fats are found in products made from olive oil, canola oil, peanut oil, nuts, and seeds. Poly-unsaturated fats include omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids. Omega-3 fatty acids are found in most fish as well as canola oil, flaxseeds, flaxseed oil, and nuts such as walnuts. Omega-6 fatty acids are found in canola oil, corn oil, safflower oil, as well as cottonseed oil. Products made with these oils include soft or squeeze margarine products, mayonnaise, and salad dressings.

Good fats (usually referred to as healthy oils) are rich in anti-oxidants, oil-based vitamins, and are associated with reduced cardiovascular events. Mono-unsaturated fats increase the HDL or healthy cholesterol, while a good balance of products rich in both omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids provide some anti-clotting benefits and appear to reduce the likelihood of cardiac arrhythmias as well as second heart attacks. Certain plant oils called plant sterols and stanols reduce LDL cholesterol and can be used as a supplement or added to spreads to actually improve cholesterol levels.

# Benefits from Consistent Use of Extra Virgin Olive Oil

## Internal Use:

- Help raise good cholesterol and lower the risk of heart disease.
- Use as an antioxidant
- Ease the pain of arthritis and bursitis – anti-inflammatory
- Calm the stomach and help the digestive tract
- Aid in preventing gallstones
- Aid in the prevention of colon cancer
- Relieve colds, sore throats and coughs

## External Use:

- Treat cuts, blisters, sunburns and frostbite
- Rejuvenates dry skin and smoothes out wrinkles
- Relieve muscle cramping