

Health Benefits of Olive Oil

You probably know olive oil for its popularity as cooking oil and the unique flavor that it imparts to salad dressings and marinades. However, the health benefits of this simple oil are absolutely astounding and well worth understanding.

Olive oil is made from olives, of course. The ripe olives are pressed until the oil runs out and the amount of processing needed in order to reach the final product gives us various grades of oil.

Extra Virgin – this is the pure oil from the first olive pressing.

Virgin – this oil is obtained from the second pressing of the olives.

Pure – olive oil that has been filtered and refined somewhat.

Extra Light – this oil has been so processed that the strong olive flavor has all but gone out of it.

For the best health benefits, extra virgin olive oil is the ideal. It has all the nutrients and antioxidants from that first pressing, while the remaining grades of oil have a somewhat reduced quantity of goodness.

Many people assume that olive oil is not good for you, since it is a fat. However, it is a mono saturated fat which is actually good for the body, as well as oleic acid and a high percentage of antioxidants. These three things combined form a potent product.

This useful oil can be used for a variety of ailments. Heated and massaged into the scalp, it helps rejuvenate hair follicles and stimulate hair growth while preventing dandruff. It can also be rubbed into the skin as an all-natural moisturizer.

Taken internally, olive oil coats the stomach and helps prevent ulcers and gastritis. It has also been shown to reduce the formation of gallstones by stimulating the pancreas and gallbladder, without the necessity of drugs. For many parents, the oil is the first thing they reach for when their baby or small child is suffering from constipation, as it also acts as a gentle bowel stimulator.

The benefits of olive oil against chronic disease first came to the attention of the general public through the famous Mediterranean diet. Investigations into why Mediterranean people live longer, healthier lives showed that this cooking oil plays a large part in the reduction of certain diseases such as high cholesterol, heart disease and even colon cancer.

While studies are still being performed, it is already evident that olive oil is good for you in more than one way!