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Mediterranean Diet: Why You Should Make Extra Virgin Olive Oil Part of Your Diet

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(HealthNewsDigest.com) - The abundant use of olives and extra virgin olive oil truly defines the traditional Mediterranean Diet. In fact it is the principal fat source and the culinary foundation for Mediterranean cuisine.

Why?

For centuries, olive oil has been a major player in the low incidence of heart disease among Mediterranean populations. Extensive research has shown that olive oil not only prevents damage to your arteries, but it also reverses high levels of cholesterol in your blood and lowers blood pressure.

Here's the proof...

Why Extra Virgin Olive Oil is an Irreplaceable Source of Fat When It Comes to Your Heart

In a study conducted by Montoya and associates, participants followed four types of diets for a five-week period:

1. One diet was rich in saturated fats
2. One in polyunsaturated fat (sunflower oil)
3. One in monounsaturated fat (extra virgin olive oil)
4. One in omega-3 fatty acids from fish.

The study showed that when people followed the diet rich in extra virgin olive oil, their levels of bad cholesterol went down and their blood pressure decreased 5 to 6 percent.

As you can see extra virgin olive oil is an irreplaceable source of fat when it comes to your heart because the main fat in olive oil is monounsaturated. This is the fat that does not get stuck in your arteries.

Now, I know you're thinking, "All olive oils have about the same proportion of monounsaturated fat, why should I buy extra virgin olive oil when it is more expensive than refined olive oil?"

Two Major Reasons Why You Need to Buy Extra Virgin Olive Oil and Not Refined Olive Oils

1. Refined olive oils are loaded with chemicals

Thousands of years ago, the olives were crushed by hand in spherical stone basins. Today, in a similar method, olives (with pits) are pounded and crushed using mechanical techniques. The oil produced in such a way (cold) is the extra virgin olive oil, the natural juice from the olives. It preserves the unique flavor, smell, and healthy properties of the fruit.

The solid residue that remains after the first extraction is sent back to the press to be beaten again and be exposed to different heat levels and chemical procedures. It is neutralized with sodium hydroxide, passed through charcoal filters, and extracted with hexane at low temperatures. With time, the use of oils that have been subjected to chemical agents may have a toxic effect on our bodies.

That's why these second extractions are not recommended for consumption.

2. Extra virgin olive oil contains more antioxidants than their refined versions

Along with a loss of color and aroma, refined olive oils lose most of its antioxidant properties. Through countless studies of these abundant minor compounds Vitamin E,

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Polyphenols and major hydrocarbon Squalene found only in extra virgin olive oil, we have learned that these compounds are strong antioxidants and potent free radical scavengers.

Scavengers like the Polyphenol Hydroxytyrosol find free radicals that are highly unstable and destructive molecules. Free radicals subject our cells to oxidative stress and continuous damage that eventually kills the cells. When radicals kill or damage enough cells in an organism, the organism ages and eventually dies.

The more antioxidants found in your body, the more cells you can save. Plus consistent evidence shows that people with low levels of antioxidants like Vitamin E in their blood have more damage in the arteries than people with an adequate amount.

Closing Arguments for Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Buying extra virgin olive oil may be a little more expensive. But in the long run you may save a lot of money and a lot of grief.

A nine-month study at the University of Granada in Spain compared the effects of extra virgin and refined olive oils on the levels of LDL oxidation in men with decreased blood flow to the arms and legs due to the thickening and narrowing of the blood vessels. The participants consumed extra virgin olive oil for the first three months. During the next three months they did not consume any olive oil. For the final three months they were given refined oil. The results showed that the amount of LDL oxidation was significantly lower after the patients consumed the extra virgin olive oil than after they consumed refined olive oil.

Buying extra virgin olive oil is your decision. But remember, the wrong decision can put your heart and your health at risk.

With her new book, "Your Heart Needs the Mediterranean Diet", Emilia Klapp has helped thousands of people just like you lower high blood pressure, reduce cholesterol levels and remove the risk of heart disease. For more information on the book and to receive a free especial report on the "Top 10 Mediterranean Curative Ingredients" go to: <http://www.mediterraneanheart.com>

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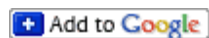
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