



Wellness Minute

Health Information You Can Use On Your Path To Wellness



Don't Buy “FAKE” Olive Oil

*Only Real Olive Oil
Has Health Benefits*

The Benefits of Olive Oil

“Olive oil has been shown to prevent overall mortality, diabetes, neurodegenerative diseases, mood disorders, and obesity.”

I laughed when I heard Dr. Gundry say the only reason to eat is to get more olive oil in your diet. But when you read the benefits from organizations like the Olive Wellness Institute from the University of California, you want to start pouring extra virgin olive oil on everything you eat. Based on over 60 scientific references, they state that extra virgin olive oil has been shown to prevent: overall mortality, diabetes, neurodegenerative diseases, mood disorders, and obesity. Olive oil promotes better glucose control in existing type 2 diabetics, reduction in overall cancer incidence, and a reversal in fatty liver disease.

If this was a drug, these findings would be all over the media day and night. The dose they suggest is 25-50 ml, which

comes out to 2-3 tablespoons. That may seem like a lot, but a tablespoon on your lunchtime veggies or a sandwich instead of mayonnaise and 2 tablespoons on your salad is pretty easy and tasty. It's fun to experiment with different ways to get it into your diet, and there are tons of recipes on the internet to excite your pallet. The primary benefit comes from a class of antioxidants called polyphenols.

As a side note, we hear so much today about the healthy bacteria and good microbes that live in our gut. We've talked about how soluble fiber feeds these good guys. Similarly, polyphenols support and enhance the growth of beneficial microbes.

All the individual polyphenol names aren't as important as what they do. But I do like one of them in particular called hydroxytyrosol. Hydroxytyrosol easily crosses the blood brain barrier to scavenge excess free radicals to protect the brain. In fact, one study found that hydroxytyrosol was able to protect brain cells from oxidative damage and reduce the accumulation of amyloid-beta, a protein associated with Alzheimer's disease. Hydroxytyrosol also has anti-aging effects helping to reduce the appearance of wrinkles and improve skin elasticity. Hydroxytyrosol may also play a role in weight management.

A study published in the *International Journal of Molecular Sciences* found that supple-

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mentation with hydroxytyrosol led to a decrease in body weight and fat mass in mice fed a high-fat diet. The Olive Wellness Institute further shared that extra virgin olive oil and the polyphenols it contains provide multiple anti-inflammatory benefits and a 13% reduction in Parkinson's and Alzheimer's Disease. They also shared studies that showed a reduction in severity of depression in individuals with existing depression.

But the benefits come from authentic extra virgin olive oil, not the fake stuff. I say fake because many marketed olive oil products are found to contain seed oils which do not contain the same polyphenols. Excessively processed seed oils actually cause inflammation.

Even the investigators from 60 Minutes have shown that many of the oils in olive oil are not olive oil at all. Consumer Labs, another independent testing organization, found the same thing. Seed oils are cheap and rancidify easily. We can't analyze all the polyphenols, although Consumer Labs did for 10 main brands. In general, they found the dark, green, golden color to contain a higher quality of polyphenols. Obviously, we want to look to see if it's organic. The last thing we want is to consume an oil that has been sprayed with chemicals.

Next, let's talk about taste. The more bitter, the better. Polyphenols have a strong taste. Olive oil, experts say great olive oil, should almost make you cough when you eat it and drink it by itself. But the fun part is to add it to your favorite dishes and salads, which cut the bitter taste. Remember, olive oil and the polyphenols it contains have antioxidants properties, so purchase it in a dark glass bottle to protect it from light. Olive oil oxidizes very easily in sunlight. So, purchase olive oil in a dark colored bottle and store it in a kitchen counter where it can't be oxidized by sunlight.

Next, make sure you purchase olive oil that boasts about the fact that it is "first processed" in a cold press. Cheaper oils will run olives through heated rollers multiple times. Some oils also use the phrase "by mechanical means only" which refers to some type of olive pressing stone to crush and press the olives.

Finally, look for a pressing date. Most olive oil is considered safe within a year of pressing. You can go for two years but no more. Remember, once you open that bottle the clock starts ticking, so it may be better to use smaller bottles and refrigerate. Food is meant to be enjoyed without guilt; good olive oil will give you the freedom to enjoy.